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PAGE 50

FEBRUARY, 1989 ISSN 14042 \$2.95 USA \$3.95 CAN

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES

NEW FROM
ACTIVISION
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| BARDOLPH | 28 | .285 | JOHNSON | 38 | .285 |
| MATTINGLY | 38 | .323 | MEYRADEZ | 18 | .255 |
| WINFIELD | 87 | .275 | STRACHEY | 31 | .284 |
| WASHINGTON | 28 | .279 | MCNEIL | 31 | .275 |
| FAUVEL | 28 | .284 | CARTER | 31 | .223 |
| RECHAM | 65 | .273 | RATNER | 28 | .250 |
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| | | | CONTEK | 28 | |

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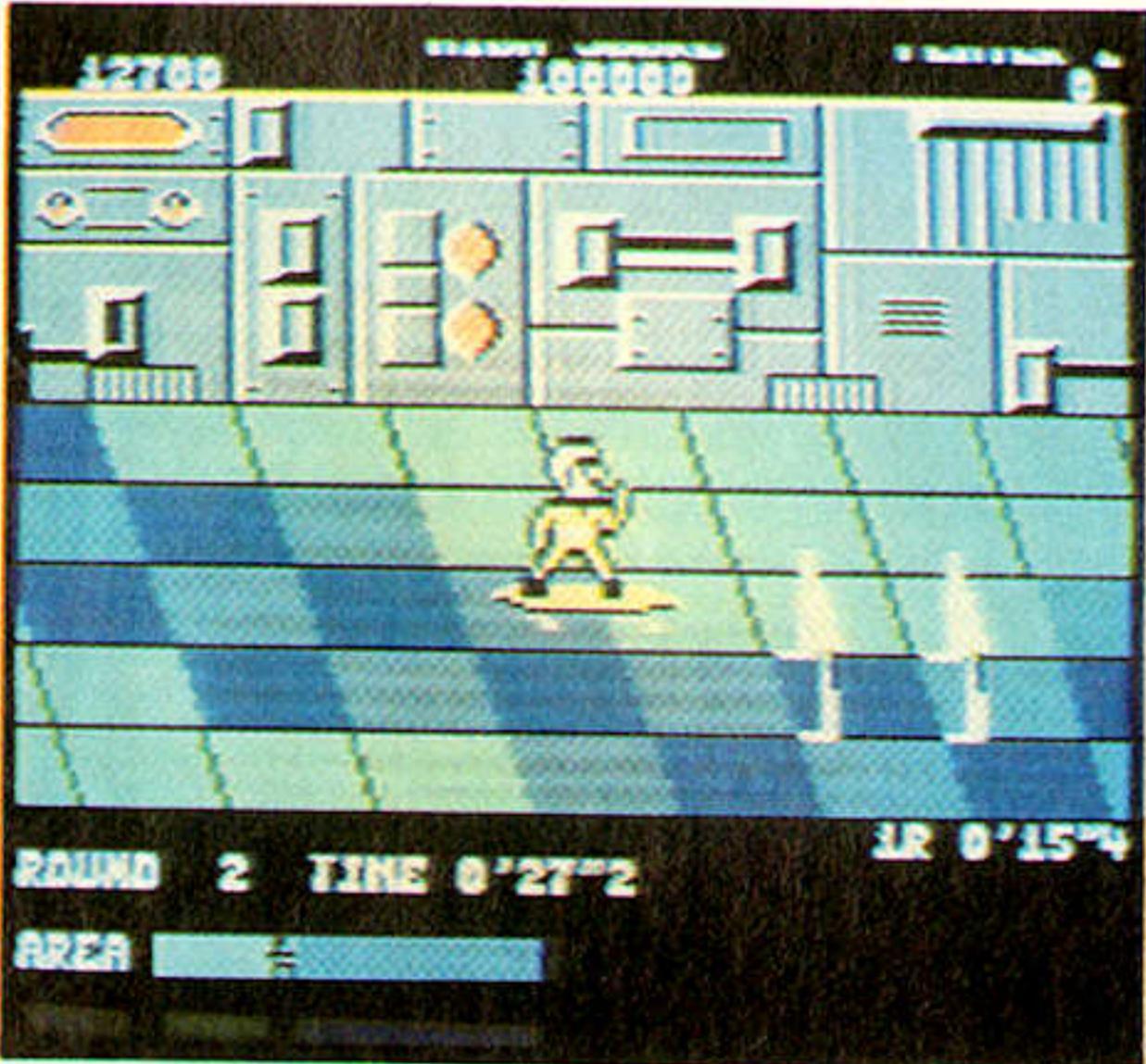
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Editor's Page

A New Staffer Says Hi

As a new editor at Computer Play, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all our readers.

I was offered this position on the strength of my game designing and programming skills, and I have a long history in both fields. I've played more computer games than most since I started in the early seventies on a system 360. There weren't that many games around then, and the first computer game I was exposed to was Pancer. We played this game on Telex terminals, and each move was printed out on rolls of paper about the size of paper towel rolls. The only storage we had for these terminals was punched paper tape that was about an inch wide. The most sophisticated terminal we had was a CRT, it even had a cassette deck for storage. Hot stuff huh? On this terminal, we could even play horse racing, and black jack with no graphics at all.

So about this time many of us started to program our own games. Such memorable games as tic tac toe, dice, and checkers (played with other human opponents only). We weren't exactly original. We also spent a lot of time on the phone trying to convince other people with 360's to trade games with us.

Things have changed considerably since. A computer that was the size of a refrigerator has now been reduced in size enough to fit on my desk. Software, and programming languages have evolved to the point where programming is faster and the quality of the product is much higher.

So what qualities do I look for in a game to consider it good? Ease of play, good documentation, and fun. By ease of play, I don't mean that I want to win the game the first time I play it. I mean that the controls should be easy to use and understand. The game should invite the player to explore it by making the first part of the game more of an introduction to the controls, and the game concept. By good documentation, I mean that the enclosed booklet should be clear to understand and should be complete; some games you can't give the store

away in the booklet though. By fun I mean enjoyable, and everyone has their own idea about that. So let's just say not a pure number accumulation type of a format, but a goal oriented type of game.

The game industry is getting larger every year, both board and computer. Every convention I have been to recently has been larger than the previous both in attendance by the public and the number of manufacturers. As machines get more sophisticated and game companies get bigger, the possibilities of tapping new markets becomes more real. New software for just about every type of person is coming out: some simulations, some games, and some creative aids.

The software entertainment market will only get bigger over the next few years. As computers become more accessible to younger people, and more mature people realize the potential of these machines the opportunities to supply their software needs will grow.

I'm happy to be part of this magazine. Few people get to work in a field that they enjoy, and gaming is an especially fun area to work in. Another thing about working for Computer Play is that we have a very professional staff, and it will not be very difficult for me to maintain the quality with their participation.

As for me, I would like to see more hints from readers on how to get by barriers in adventure type games, or how to improve one's game in an arcade type of a game. I also want to see more reviews per issue, and more general coverage such as in our Industry News column.

I am looking forward to maintaining the quality of this magazine, and even improving on it. There's a lot of work to be done every month, since the quantity of new games is on the rise. So I'll be keeping you informed of the games that are worth playing, and warning you of the ones to stay away from. You'll be hearing from me in future issues, and I hope to be hearing from you.

Berdj Betchakdian

Letters & hints

Send letters to the editor to: Computer Play, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076

Definite Opinion

Responding to James Hale's letter, I think you should keep the NINTENDO reviews and ads in your magazine. I own both a NINTENDO and an APPLE IIGS, and I liked your magazine enough to subscribe to it. If you don't like a magazine, don't buy it. You shouldn't change your magazine for one person and ruin it for all the others who like it just the way it is!

Matt Stevenson
Brookings, OR

More Comments and Suggestions

I'm an avid fan of computer games. I was pleased with your September issue and am contemplating a subscription.

Now for some comments, and suggestions:

- 1) More Amiga game reviews. The Amiga is surely one of the best computers for games. It may not have as many games as the Apple, or C-64, but the ones it does have are very high quality.
- 2) Make your magazine more balanced. Have sports, role playing, strategy, arcade, etc., sections per month instead of focusing on one topic per month.

Scott Westbrook
Tucson, AZ

Direct Observations

I'd like to start this long, rather involved letter with general praise for COMPUTER PLAY, it's the only computer magazine I buy. However I want to give you numerous constructive remarks I hope you make a response to.

I am tired of hearing complaints about the scorecard, it's seriously blown out of proportion and I wouldn't care if it were completely deleted. (That might add more space for useful stuff) The reviews are much more important, which leads me to my next point: pack in as many reviews as possible, even if it means shortening some of those distended reviews. The more reviews we see, the better the chance we'll see the current review of the game we're interested in buying. That is the most important item you can provide - the maximum numbers of up-to-date reviews.

Save Nintendo and Channel 3. They are worthy of reviews just as Amiga and Atari are. I see you already are cutting down the space they get while there is still a wealth of Nintendo games waiting to be mentioned. Many "real computer" owners also own a Nintendo or Sega system. Your coverage of both "real computers" and video-games makes the magazine more appealing to me, members of Bulletin Board systems around me, and undoubtedly those like me all across the country. None of us would like Nintendo removed from the magazine. (notice, we aren't calling for Amiga and Atari's removal!)

Your Industries News and Views column is very useful, as is the address section. Continue packing as much news as you can dig up into the column and try to find more 1-800 phone numbers - long distance is expensive!

Why isn't there a Question and Answer area? It's a very basic, but very useful idea. Another question I have is why you have not reviewed any Titus software? They have released many new, interesting looking games, yet you continue to avoid mentioning them. Then, are there any plans to do a story on the most inexpensive places to purchase games? EVERYONE should enjoy that.

I'm holding off my subscription check until I see that the Nintendo column expands and stabilizes as well as until a host of other, smaller problems I have mentioned are smoothed out. Despite the obvious problems, I still feel this is a good game magazine with excellent potential.

Michael Slater
Murrysville, PA

For a review of Off-Shore Warrior from Titus, see page 14.

Different View

I read the review of Gunship in your November issue of COMPUTER PLAY. I thought the review had several faults I would like to point out:

- 1) Your reviewer gave the product an 8 for realism which might appear to be a very high rating at first glance but when you consider it is barely average compared to many of the other games reviewed by your magazine I think it is grossly underrated. I own over 10 top rated military simulations on my IBM compatible and I can vouch for the unprecedent accuracy in Gunship which I have yet to see matched except for F-19 Stealth Fighter, another top product by Microprose.

- 2) Playability is a very subjective rating and considering the game was tested on floppies with the slower IBM PC/XT and in CGA graphics mode the rating of 7 is an indicator of nothing but the author's personal impressions which he got based specifically on his machine. For example, loaded from a hard drive, the game loads in a matter of seconds. The comprehensive tutorials included in the manual make learning how to operate the game quick and painless.

- 3) I think that your rating system of packaging is absurd and has no place in your magazine. First of all the consumer can judge the package for himself when he buys the game and secondly I really don't think anyone cares what the reviewer thinks of the box.

Another magazine which conducts consumer surveys whereby the readers rate the latest games over a period of months rated Gunship consecutively month after month second or third of 50 of the top games. I think that shows that the reviewer is in the minority with his lack of enthusiasm for this game.

Adam Goodman
Fair Lawn, NJ

Which Computer?

I have received the November Issue of COMPUTER PLAY and it is the best computer magazine I've seen. But my question is: I am looking for a powerful 16 bit computer. Can you tell me which one is the best? Could it be the Apple IIGS vs. Commodore Amiga? What I look for in a computer is excellent graphics, and extremely good sounds. I own a Nintendo and your Channel Three section is fantastic. Also your way of reviewing games is easy to understand. You get right to the point telling what makes the game good, or bad! Keep up the great work.

Ian Wijaya
Princeton, NJ

General Tips

I would like to give some general tips on playing computer and home video games to your readers. Take notes on what kind of video games you are playing. Make a pattern, and stick to it when you start to play your game. Practice! Practice! Practice! The more you practice, the better you'll play. Keep records on your scores. This is something like a report card on how well you're doing on the video game. Keep these tips in mind and you'll be a great video game player on the home games and coin-ops.

Ples E. Coleman, Jr.
Chicago, IL

Industry News & Views

By Rusel DeMaria

Now that the major Christmas rush has passed, it's time to look at the year to come. Many companies are planning their strategies for 1989 and even into 1990. Some companies have just announced new products at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, others are in planning stages of games and simulations to come. Generally, this is a slower time of year for game releases, but no one will go hungry. There's plenty on the shelf.

First, an observation: Ancient Japan has become one of the popular themes in games recently released and soon to be available. There have long been an assortment of karate and ninja arcade games, but now such notable companies as Cinemaware, Infocom, and Microprose have announced titles dealing with the land of the samurai. Koel, too, already has its Japanese title in progress. All of these titles will take the player into the culture of ancient Japan and, perhaps, into the mindset of bushido--the ancient code of the warrior. With the Japanese buying more and more of our assets, perhaps it makes some sense to get to know them better.

Was it coincidence, or just great timing? It was one or the other when Microprose released their F-19 Stealth Fighter game on the same day the Air Force finally announced the real article. According to a Microprose spokesperson, there are more than a few similarities between their computer simulation and the real thing. For one, even though the official name of the Air Force plane is F117A, according to Microprose, most insiders still refer to it as the F-19. Both planes feature a single seat cockpit, twin engines which can be concealed, and something called a twin boom lifting design (which has something to do with the way the plane lifts off). Anyway, I think the Microprose version is as close to the real thing as I want to get.

On the subject of authenticity, Mindscape is planning some very appealing new games for us. Top among them is **Aussie Games**, a collection of six authentic down-under sports. Are you ready for beer bottle shoot? How about dry river boat races, beach football, marlin fishing, and, of course, boomerang toss? But the one I am most curious about is the belly whack competition. It sounds like something I'll be glad I'm doing on a computer. Also from the down-under connection: **Aussie Joker Poker**, a card game that allows you to play both player and/or dealer, and play with up to 90 players! I'd like to see a game with 90 players huddled around one computer.

Mindscape is also starting the year with a great collection of other titles: **Hostage** puts you in control of a six-person special forces team whose task it is to rescue hostages from a captured embassy. In this game for the Amiga, Atari ST, PC, or C64, you can observe the action from several unique angles--from above, from below, from inside the embassy, and more. Apple IIGS and Mac versions will be coming later in the year. Or, if you're not ready for the special forces, perhaps you'll like a visit to the **Combat Course**, a do-it-yourself boot camp with 4 levels of play and build your own obstacle courses, for the Amiga, Atari ST, PC, and C64. Or, if you want to get a different kind of training, try **Sgt. Slaughter's Mat Wars**, a wrestling simulation for the PC and the C64. Work your way up the circuit from the grimy dives to the glitzy main arena. Finally, Mindscape doesn't want to ignore more conventional sport, so they've introduced **International Team Sports** from SportTime. This game features athletes from 31 other countries competing against you in volleyball, water polo, soccer, swimming, and track.

Epyx held onto some secrets until CES, where they announced seven new titles: **Technocop** (C64, Amiga, Atari ST, Apple II, PC) and **Skate Wars** (C64, Amiga, Atari ST, PC) both take us into dangerous future worlds. In Technocop, your task is to bust the bad guys in a world of high tech toys like your V-MAX Twin-Turbo Interceptor (a vehicle that would make Knight Rider jealous), complete with an arsenal of weaponry and an on-board computer system. Lots of driving thrills and head to head confrontations with the criminal element. In Skate Wars, on the other hand, you play a gladiator in a future tradition that combines magnetic skates, metal-studded balls, and lots of danger. The million dollar salaries are fine, but don't expect to spend it all. Death is only a spiked ball, bottomless pit, or any one of a number of hazards away. If the arena and the V-MAX aren't enough, you can take to the seas in a sophisticated submarine in **Undersea Commando** (Amiga, Atari ST). Your job is to seek and destroy more villains.

Data East is getting into sports. They've signed an agreement with Scott Orr, the developer of such fine sports titles as **Pete Rose Pennant Fever**, to develop a new line of football, basketball, and baseball games for all computer formats. **Platoon** should be out by now on the PC with versions on the way for Amiga, Apple II, and Atari ST. **Super Hang On** will be Data East's first Mac game. Also introduced at CES: **Bad Dudes** (gang fighting on Nintendo), **RoboCop** for C64, Amiga,

and Atari ST, and **Guerrilla War** for C64, Amiga, Atari ST, and PC.

Discovery told me about some upcoming, though still untitled games, that they will be introducing. One is a military game described as a "military olympics". Also look for a new sports title, and a business game that is described as an "executive arcade game". Also, probably already out is the **Arkanoid Construction Set** for the Mac.

John Elway's Quarterback should be shipping on the Nintendo, from Tradewest.

Mastertronic is hoping to be shipping **War in Middle Earth** about the time we hit the stands with this issue. Also look for a new title called **Artura**, an action adventure game similar to **Barbarian** and **Obiliterator**, from Arcadia. It will premier on the C64, Amiga, and Atari ST, with a PC version later (around April). Melbourne House is coming out with a new soccer game, first for the coin-ops, then, later, for the Amiga and the PC. Finally, I've been told that **Slam Dunk** is a code conversion of the coin-op game, **Magic Johnson's Fast Break**. I'll be looking forward to seeing it.

Taito has announced the discontinuation of the Nintendo version of **Arkanoid**, but they are releasing the game on the Apple II and the Atari ST. Also coming are **Bubble Bauble** on Nintendo, **Operation Wolf** for C64, a new mental stimulation game called **Kix** for the C64, with versions for other systems coming in March. And there's more: **Alcon**, a planetary battle game for the PC and Atari ST, **Rastan**, a swords and sorcery arcade game for the Amiga and Atari ST (PC coming in March), **Renegade**, a street fighting game that takes place in a subway (for PC, Amiga, Apple II and IIgs, Atari ST) should be out now; also **Sky Shark** for the

Amiga, Atari ST, C64 and PC.

Acclaim announced a sequel to their very popular Nintendo cartridge, **Wizards and Warriors**. This one is called **"Iron Sword: Wizards and Warriors 2"**. Also coming up are **Knight Rider** (based on the TV series), **Air Wolf**, **Othello**, and a new wireless controller for the Nintendo game machines. Acclaim is also introducing several new hand held games, including **WWF Wrestlemania**.

Masterplay is announcing the second of the three part **Star Saga** games. This one, **Star Saga: Two**, will be out in June for the PC and the Apple II.

Accolade, after a very busy fourth quarter of 1988 will only tell us that lots of games are coming in 1989. Not specific titles, yet. Sorry.

360 Pacific expects to ship **Harpoon** this month.

Other quick takes: From Titus, **Xerion** for the Macintosh, **Galactic Conqueror** (with full screen rotation of aerial maneuvering); from Bandai, Nintendo versions of **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**, **Bandi Golf**, and (in the Spring) **Maze Rider**, **Shooting Gallery**, **Wild Boys**; from Capcom, **MegaMan 2** and eight or nine more Nintendo titles through 1989, including several new Disney games and one featuring the California Raisins.

CODES:

| |
|-----------------------------|
| C64 = Commodore 64/128 |
| A2 = Apple II |
| PC = IBM PC and compatibles |
| Am = Amiga |
| ST = Atari ST |
| GS = Apple IIGS |
| Mac = Macintosh |
| Mac2 = Macintosh II |
| Nin = Nintendo |
| Sega = Sega |
| Hnd = handheld |

NEW PORTS

| Title | Publisher | New Formats | When? |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|
| Colony | Mindscape | PC | Jan |
| Zork Zero | Infocom | PC, A2 | ? |
| Zany Golf | EA | Amiga | Jan |
| Modem Wars | EA | PC | Jan |
| Legacy of Ancients | EA | PC | Jan/Feb |
| Double Dragon | Arcadia | ST | Jan? |
| Pool of Radiance | SSI | PC | Jan |
| Heroes of the Lance | SSI | Am, C64 | Jan |
| Dondra | MicroIllusions | GS, C64, PC | ? |
| Faery Tale Adventure | MicroIllusions | PC, Mac2 | Feb (PC) |
| Star Saga: One | MasterPlay | A2 | Jan |
| Falcon | Spectrum Holobyte | C64 | Jan/Feb |
| Tetris | Spectrum Holobyte | ST | Jan/Feb |
| Manhunter | Sierra | ST | Jan |
| Dream Zone | Bauderville | PC, Am, ST | now |
| Barbarian | Mastertronic | PC | Jan |
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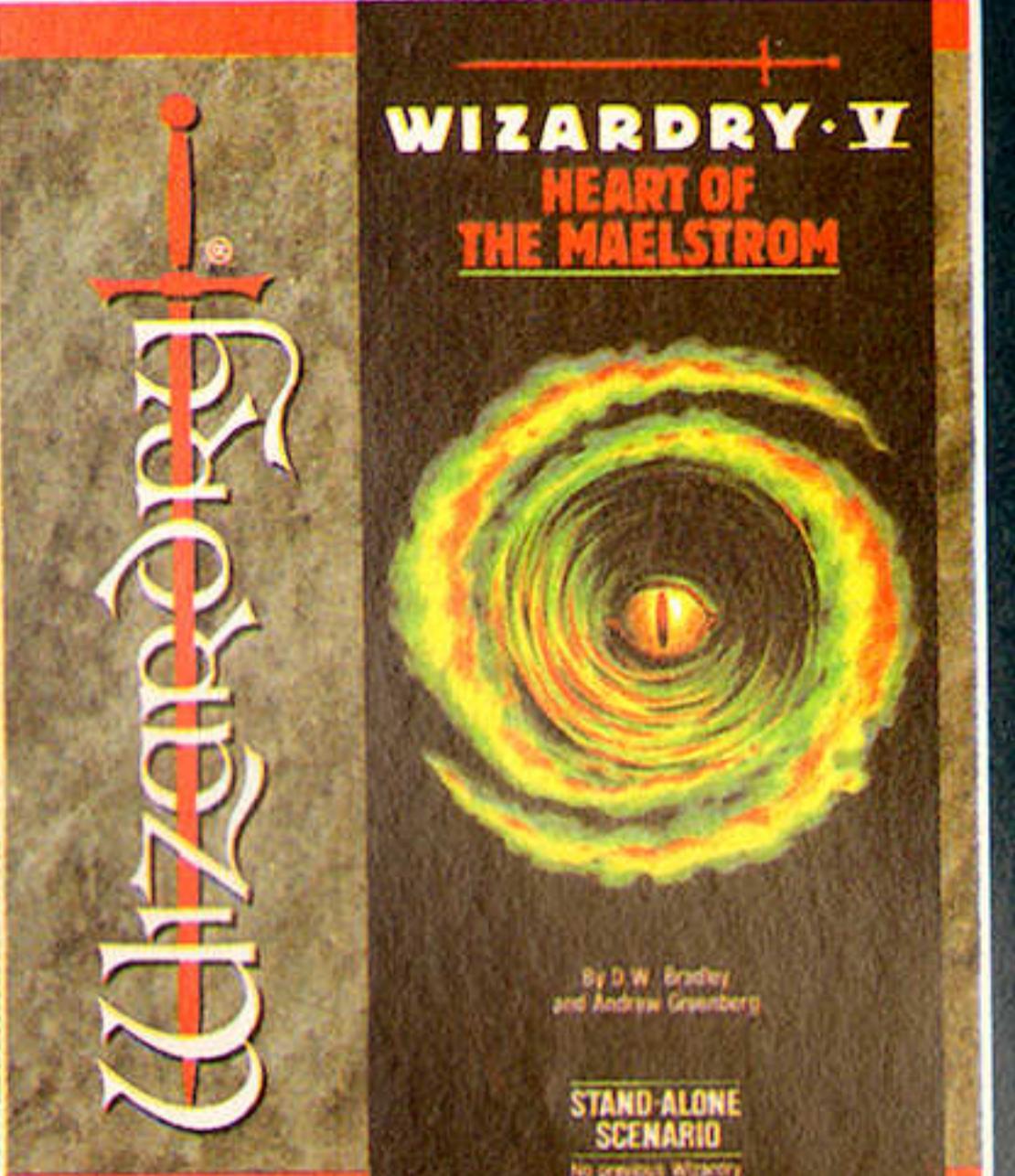
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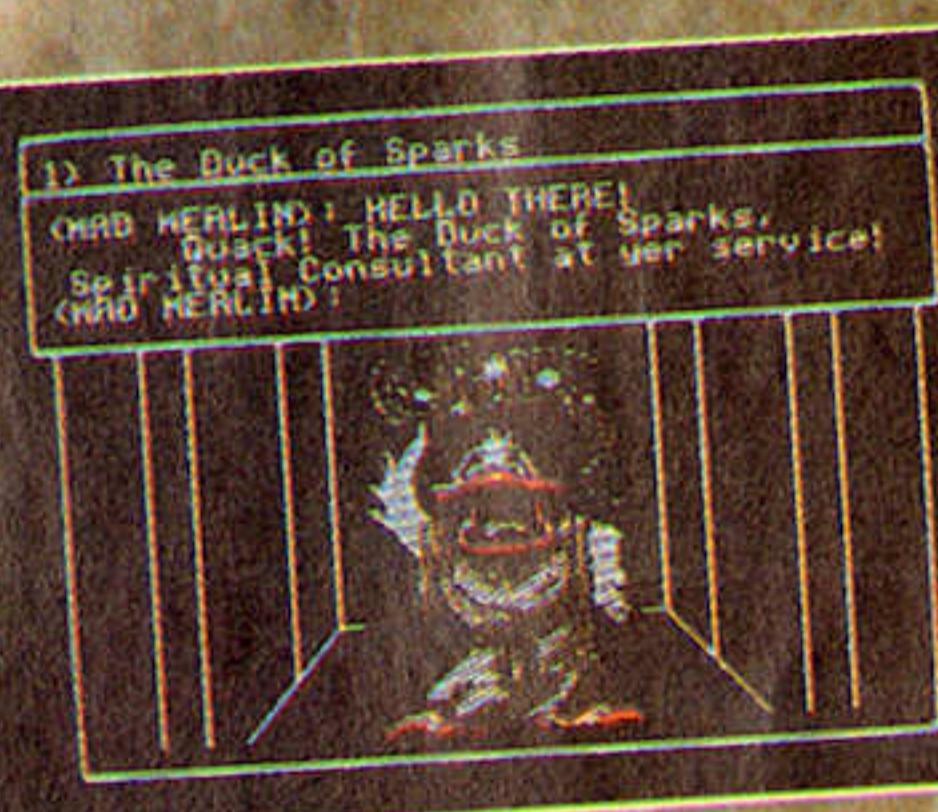


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PLAY IT TO THE HILT!
Circle Reader Service Number 19.

The Total Navy Pilot Career Simulator



By Berdj Betchakdjian

F-14 Tomcat is more than another combat jet fighter simulator, it's a total naval fighter pilot career simulator. Starting from the minute you enlist, you even sign the papers, until you either retire, or die in combat. You go through training, get assigned to a squadron, then go through a tour of duty, and go to combat in a hot spot. After a combat mission, you can get medals, if you do well, then take R and R.

FLIGHT TRAINING

Every enlistee must go through flight training before he is evaluated as a pilot. Depending on how well one performs during training, he gets assigned to a "pipeline"; this means that if you do very well, you get the jet pipeline, if not so well you get either props (propeller planes) or helos (helicopters). This information is given to you by an instructor who stands before a jet on a runway.

Training is carried out in a T-2 Buckeye trainer. You get in the cockpit of your trainer, then take off for your first training flight. Once you take off in your trainer, you start to climb and you get instruction over the radio--lines of text on the bottom of your screen. The instructions are simple: Climb to an altitude, take a particular heading, come in to land. You can land with the automatic landing control, or you can land with the joystick. If you don't use the automatic landing you should be ready to crash a couple of

times since it's tricky to land until you get a little practice.

On your second training flight, you'll get instructions from your C.O. (commanding officer) and this time you'll fly behind your C.O. as he shows you some basic maneuvers that can save your life later. The instant replay will show you how you performed your maneuvers so you can learn from your mistakes.

There are four basic maneuvers that you are expected to learn at this point in the game. The low-G yo-yo is when you dive to increase your speed, then you pull up to lock on to your enemy. The break lets you lose airspeed by banking sharply, this lets the enemy plane overshoot you so that you wind up behind him. The spiral dive allows you to increase your speed to get away from the other plane. Then, there's the Immelmann. This allows you to change your heading by pulling up sharply, then lowering your nose into a new heading.

COMBAT

Once you make it to the Nimitz war can break out any minute, and you're the first line of defense or offense. Before you go to combat, a T.V. news reporter will tell you about it. He will tell you where the war is, and what country the emergency is in like it is a typical news report. Of course, you just happen to be in the area. You then find yourself in the briefing room of the Nimitz where Admiral Hawk will brief you about the mission you are to fly. He will tell you that bogeys are coming in, from where, and that you have permission to shoot them down.

10 ►

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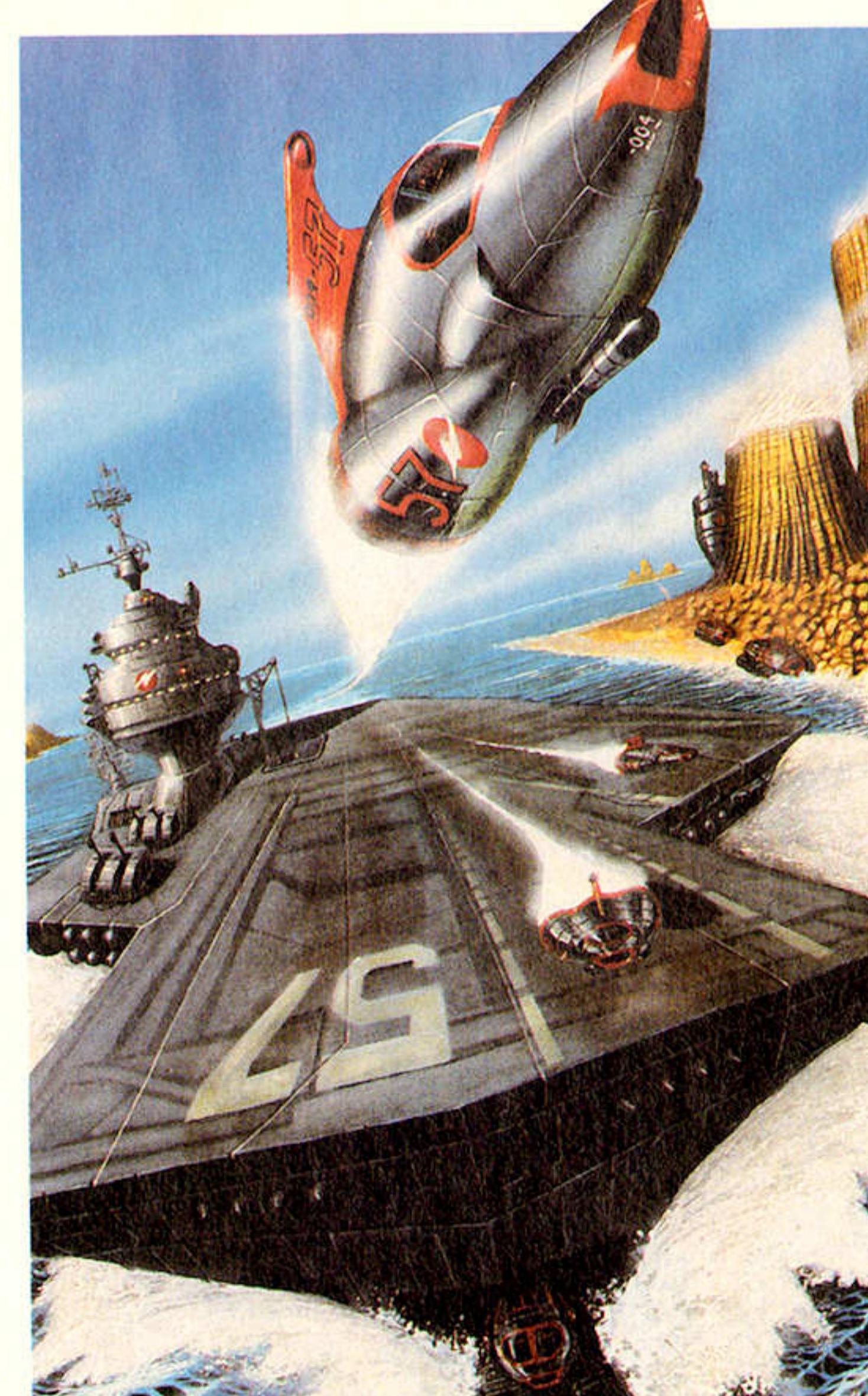
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You take off from your carrier, and head for the enemy planes that are shown on your radar scope. You armament consists of four systems: Phoenix, Amraam, Sidewinder, and Vulcan. The Phoenix missiles are for long range targets; these missiles are good for targets that are more than thirty-one miles away. Amraam missiles are your intermediate range missiles, and are good for targets between thirty-one to eleven miles' distance. Sidewinders are good for targets less than eleven miles' distance and function as your short range system. The Vulcan cannon are good for dogfights only, extreme close range.

Your defense consists of two systems. You have chaff rockets to divert radar tracking missiles. You also have flares to divert the heat seeking missiles. You can use evasion tactics to avoid missiles that are targeting you. You can dive with full throttle to gain speed and outrun the missile, or you can do some sharp turns to throw the missile off course. The danger with tight turn maneuvers is that if your G's are too high on the turns, you can black out and crash.

During your combat flights, you fly towards the enemy targets, and engage them first with missiles then with your cannon in dogfights. You then return to your carrier, and land on the pitching deck. If you do well, you can get medals, and that can help you later in your career. Admiral Hawk will debrief you once you're back.

THE CONTROLS

The F-14 is controlled by both joystick, and keyboard. The joystick controls turns, dives, and climbs. The rest of the functions are controlled by the keyboard. These include: rudders, weapons, defensive measures, and throttle.

The joystick control is easy. The F-14

on the carrier. When your combat mission is ended, you can take some time off for R and R. **THE GAME ITSELF**

This game is very well thought out. The graphics are great, and the controls are easy to handle. When the game is booted, the first thing you see is an excellent rendition of a carrier at sea. Above the carrier, you see F-14's doing different types of maneuvers as the credits roll on.

The cockpit is easy to understand. On the Heads Up Display (HUD), there's the altimeter on the left side, and the airspeed indicator on the right side. These are graduated vertical lines that scroll as your speed and altitude change. The compass is a horizontal line, and it links the two vertical lines making a square where you see the sky and ground. The target cursor is in the middle of this square.

The instrument panel is below the canopy. The tactical information display (TID), takes up the center of the panel. On the left is the throttle, on the right is your weapons display. The chaff, and flare indicators are on the right. A few other instruments that are necessary are also there.

maneuvers very well, and since it's stable, it is not critical if you let go of the stick for a second to activate one of the keyboard functions.

I, personally, enjoyed the game very much. I only had one problem with it that I feel I should share with you. When you die, you are told to put in side four of the two disk set. Once you put this side in and press the button, you see a full dress Marine funeral. For those of us who have had the misfortune to attend one of these functions, it brings up some bad memories, and it does not make us want to play it again after the first time we see this screen.

Name: F-14 TOMCAT
Type: Jet Combat Simulator
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: Activision
Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: Joystick, Disk Drive
Players: One
Price: \$44.95

Ability Level: Advanced
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Very Good (8.2)
Graphics: Excellent (9.1)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATINGS: 8.56
Circle Reader Service Number 11.

Loses Something in Translation

By Jim Fink

"If once you forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time".

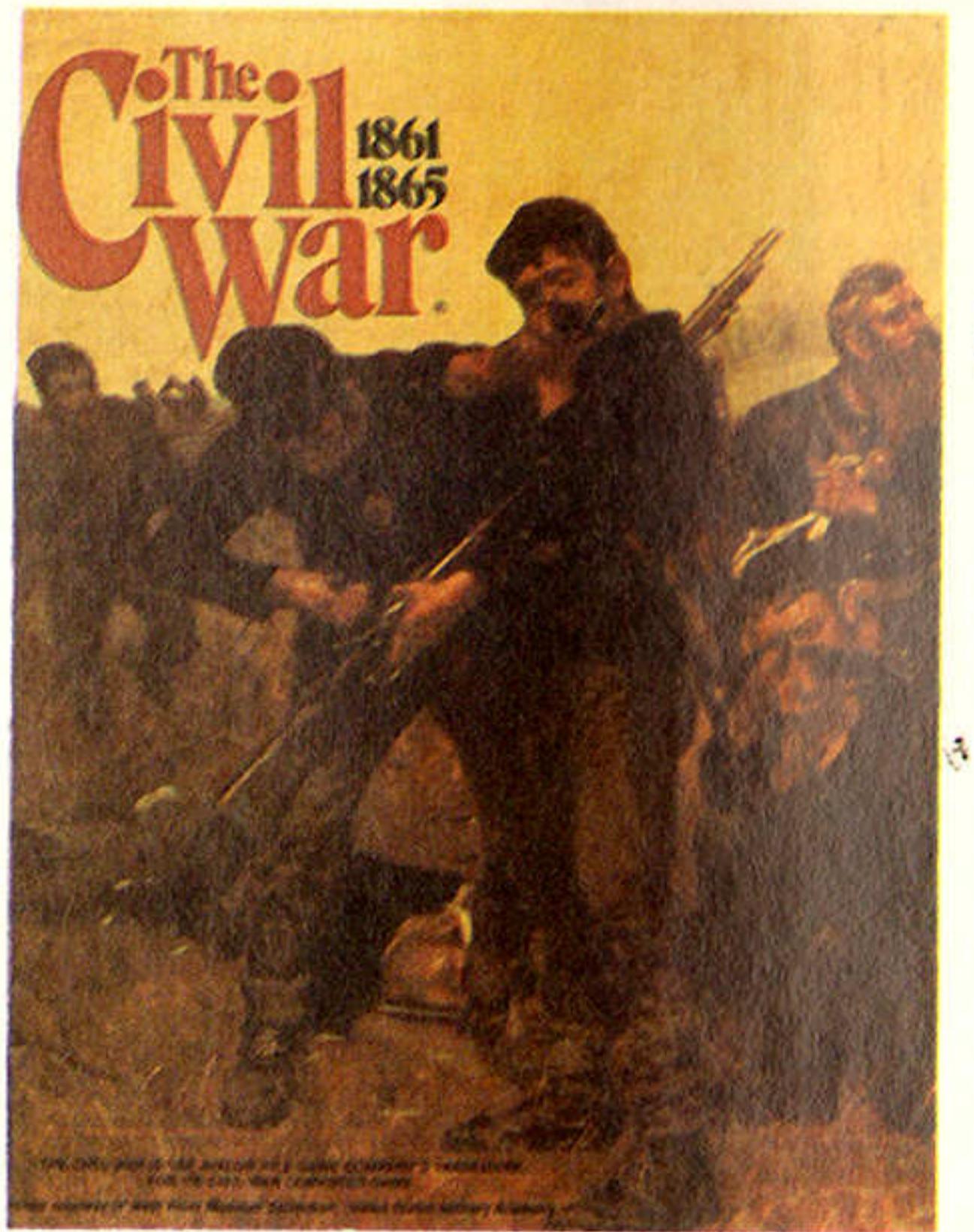
A. LINCOLN

For decades, the Avalon Hill Game company dominated the strategic board game market by producing high quality products. That formula has been abandoned in the production of "The Civil War", a computerization of the innovative board game of the same name.

There is a fundamental flaw in the notion of directly translating a board game to a computer by computerizing it, i.e. by simply attempting to reproduce the board game on the computer screen. This approach is the equivalent of trying to translate a novel from Russian to English, word-for-word. It should be intuitively obvious that certain concepts in one domain have no direct analog in the other and are not directly translatable. A translation of "War and Peace" made by looking up each word from the original in a Russian-English dictionary and replacing it with its English counterpart would be ludicrous. Likewise this game.

Beyond this failure in concept, "The Civil War" is equally deficient in execution:

- While the game requires a color graphics adapter, the graphics portion of the adapter is never used. Instead, a game map central to the play of the game is portrayed using the "block



graphics" characters (which are not graphics at all) which so distorts the map of the United States that it is unrecognizable. So poor is this representation that your are warned in the instructions that what you see is only an "approximation" of what is really going on. A paper map has been included (from the original board game) and it is up to you to try and make sense out of the two.

The choice of colors and blinking characters quickly gave me a headache.

The instructions are, for the most part, lifted directly out of the board game with minimal rewriting. Consequently, they are not very useful.

When playing against the computer, one is only allowed to play the North.

As an opponent, the South is not very challenging.

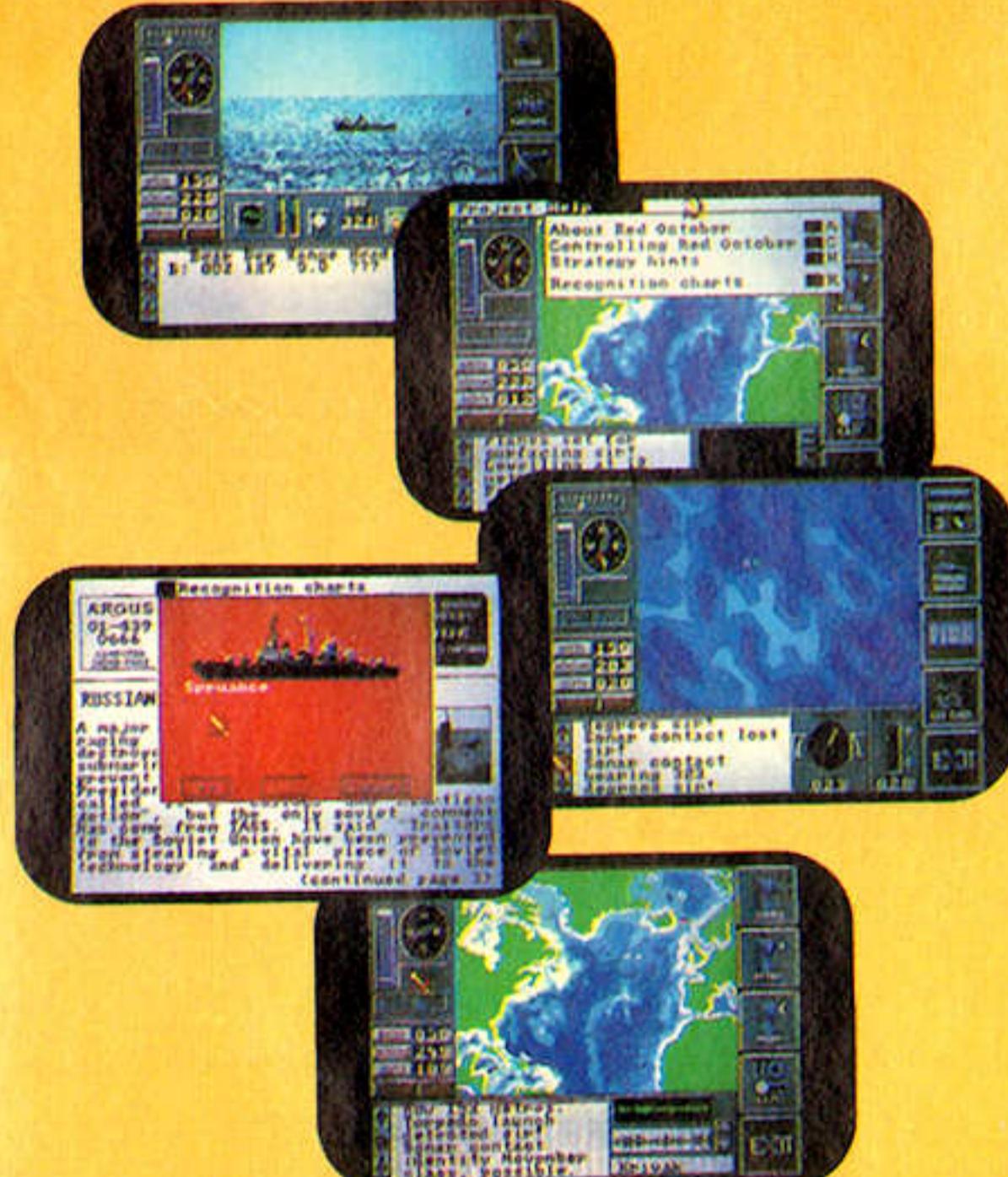
Considering the quality of the computer games already on the market covering the Civil War, it is not clear to me, why Avalon Hill decided to release "The Civil War". It is an embarrassing step backward in the development of computer wargame simulations.

Name: THE CIVIL WAR
Type: Simulation
Formats: IBM
Publisher: Avalon Hill Game Company
Designer: Steve Estvanik
Ages: 13 & up
Requirements: Color Graphics Adapter, (CGA, EGA or VGA)
Players: One or Two
Price: \$35.00

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Average (5)
Documentation: Fair (3)
Graphics: Poor (2)
Realism: Average (6)
Playability: Fair (3)

CP RATINGS: 3.45
Circle Reader Service Number 13.

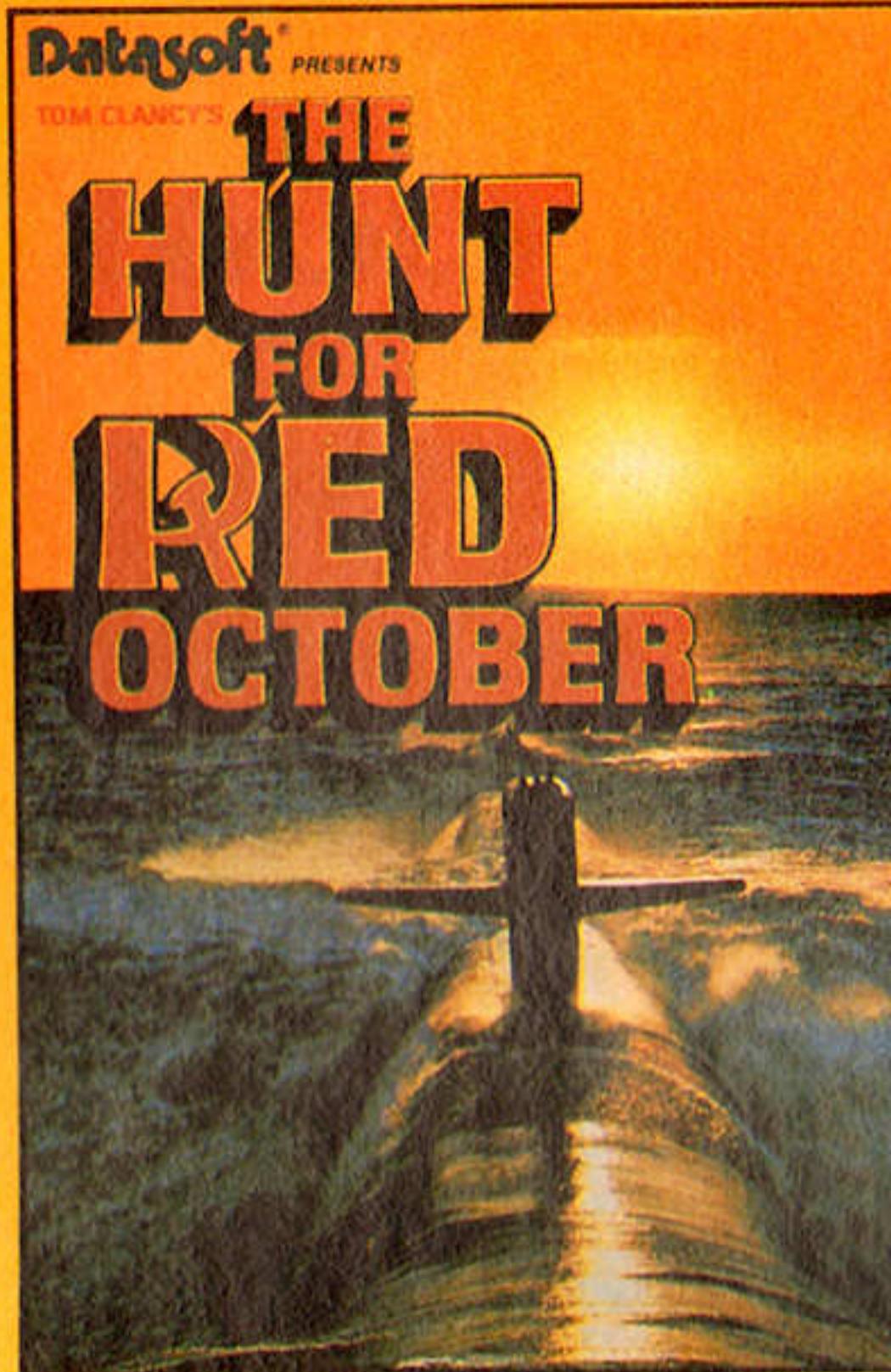
TOM CLANCY'S THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER



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Circle Reader Service Number 46.

Water Warriors Make Waves



Moving in on the competition is Offshore Warrior.

By Daniel Carr

Some time, way into the future, Extra-Terrestrial Pacifists have come to Earth and with their peace doctrine have managed to take control. War is gone and any kind of violent sport has been abolished. This has caused sever psychological trauma to armchair quarterbacks and couch potatoes.

So, to rectify this situation, the OFF SHORE WARRIOR movement started. The players pilot incredibly big powerboats armed with incredibly big rockets around a course in some of the worlds most incredibly big lakes. Incredible, isn't it? Well, I wish I could say the same for the game.

OFF SHORE WARRIOR is a very simple arcade-style game in which the object is to race your boat against several other computer-played boats, use your rockets to destroy opponents, and watch out for rocks. You must take first or second place to continue racing in the next match. Winning four races earns a Championship for the year.

Your boat occupies the bottom center of the screen similar to the arcade game "Pole Position". On the Amiga, the graphics are excellent

with lots of color and detail showing off the boat with clouds, mountains and buildings in the background. The joystick controls the boat and you must stay between the buoys or you'll crash on the rocks. Hitting another boat head-on will also result in a crash and its hard to catch up to the pack after a wipe-out. Staying alive and killing opponents score points which are kept at the top of the screen.

You have essentially two weapons. Rockets can help you to win but you only have a total of three less than the number of opponents, so use them wisely. The other weapon is to push an opponent's boat into the rocks. This is very hard to do and your boat can easily crash.

Waves are trouble. When you hit one, your boat will fly up into the air, lose control and can crash on the rocks or get hit from behind by a boat. Plus, you'll slow down giving your opponents time to catch up.

Several problems exist. First, the animation is jerky. I've seen many arcade-style games with very smooth and complicated animation sequences and this program seems to make short use of the Amiga's graphic capabilities. It's hard to line up a target and fire a rocket. Plus I've found it impossible to push an opponent into the

Name: OFF SHORE WARRIOR
Type: Arcade
Formats: Amiga, IBM, Atari ST
Publisher: Titus Software
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Joystick
Players: One
Price: \$39.95

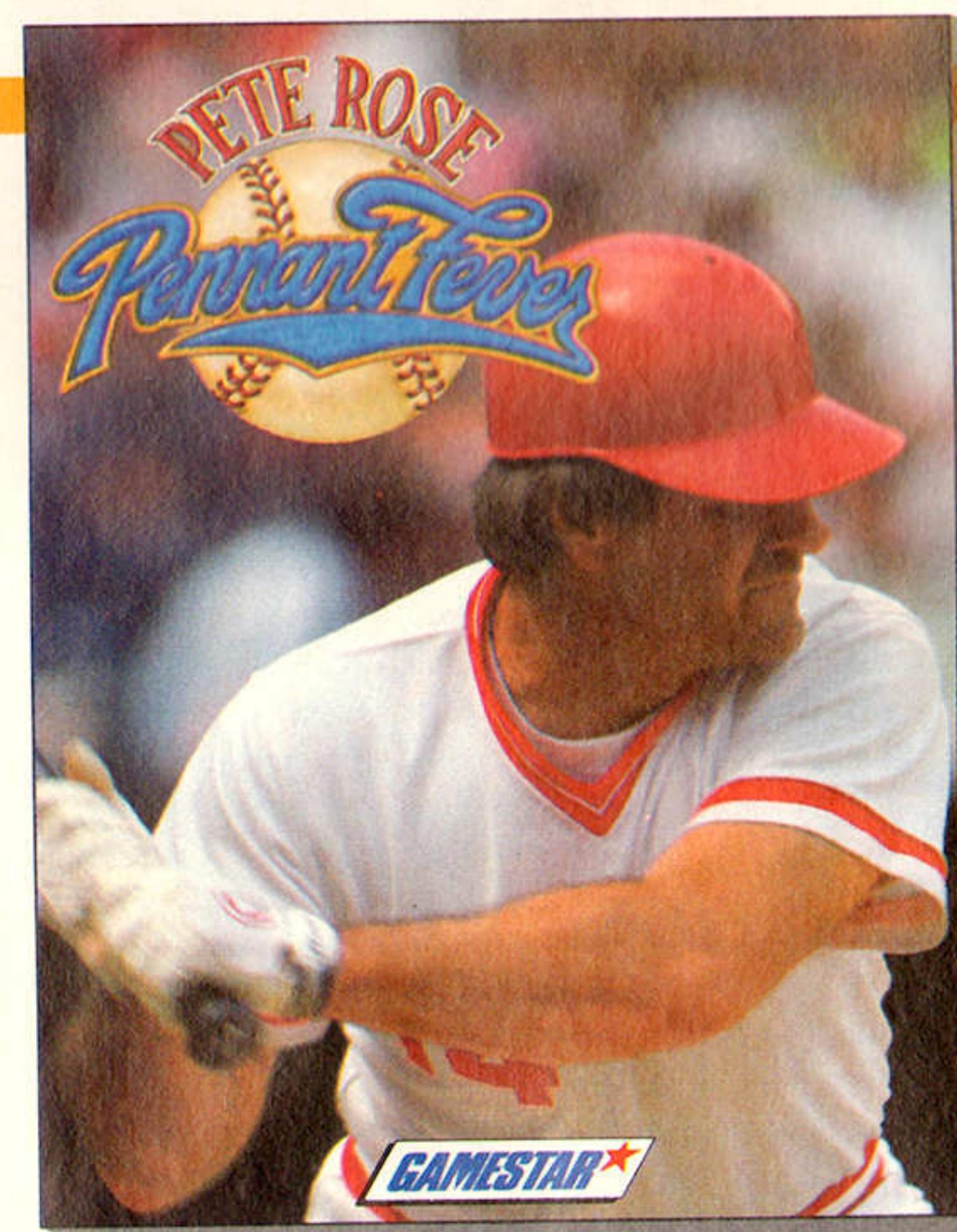
Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Average (5)
Documentation: Good (7)
Graphics/Text: Good (8)
Playability: Average (6)

CP RATINGS: 6.80
Circle Reader Service Number 16.

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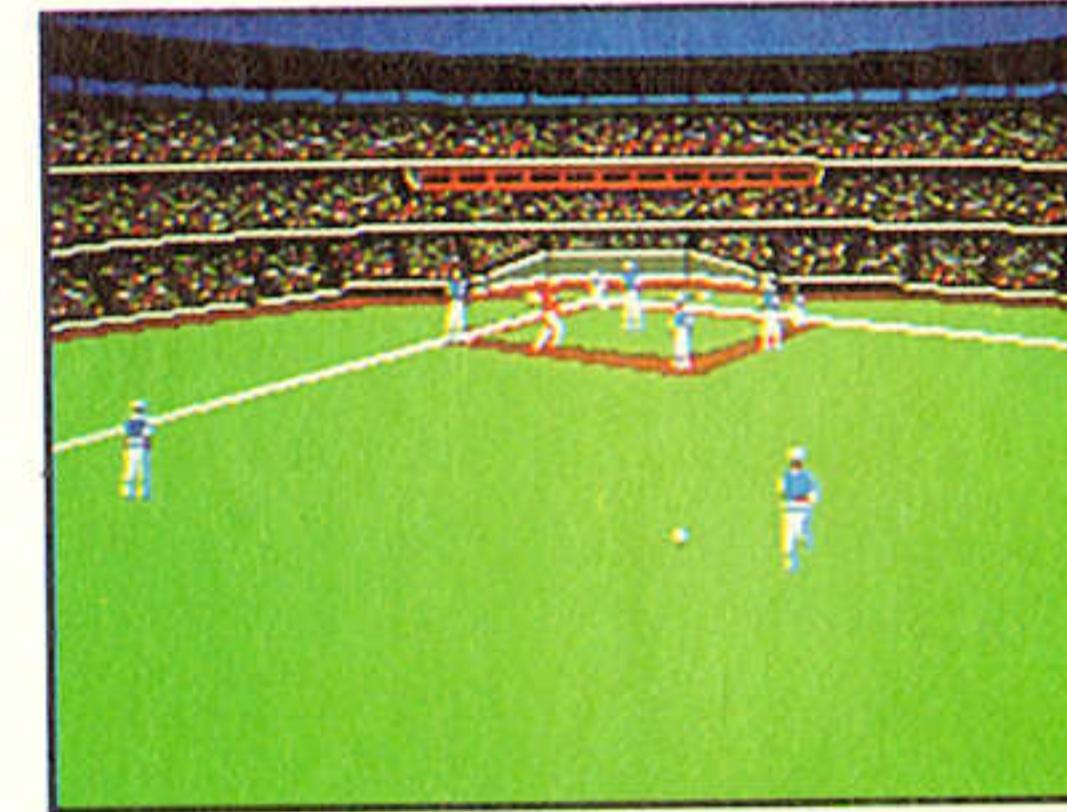


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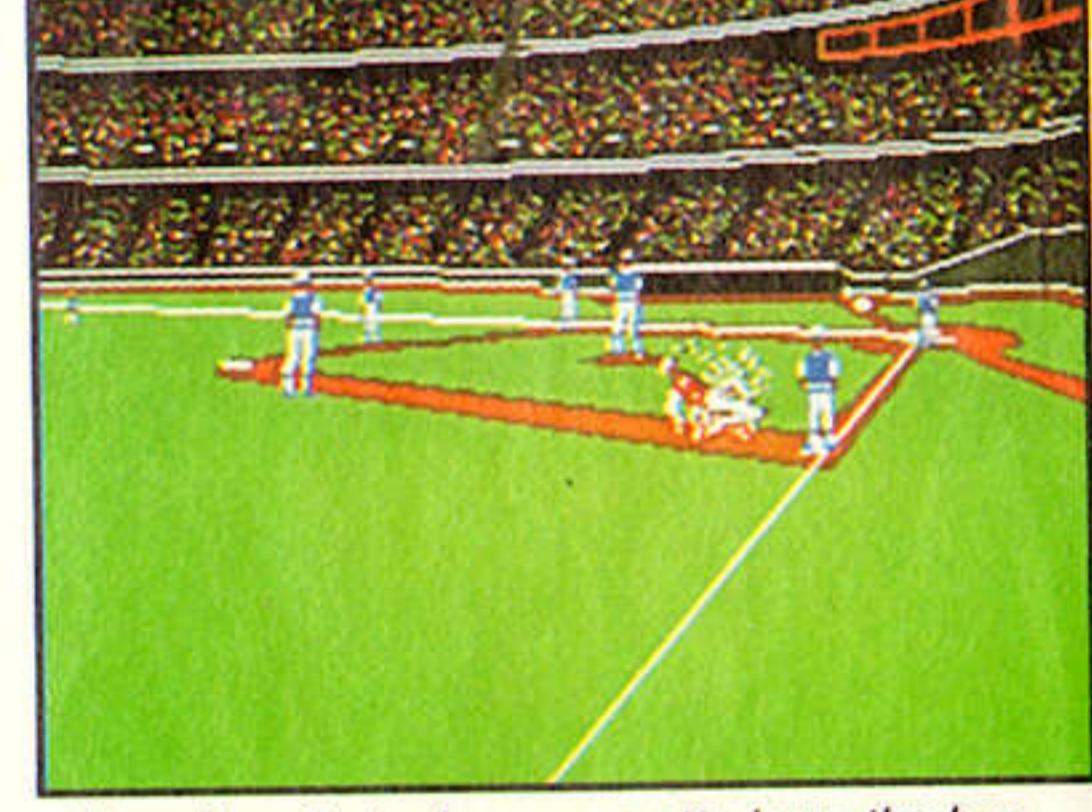
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GAMESTAR

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Circle Reader Service Number 65.

**PETE ROSE PENNANT FEVER.
 BASEBALL AT ITS BEST.**

A Sports Simulator Par Excellence

By Rusel DeMaria

I played 36 holes today, and I didn't even work up a sweat. I even played a few holes against the great Jack Nicklaus, himself, though he beat me with his great approach shots, and, especially, with his dead-eye putts. Still I had a lot of fun, and we ended the game still friends.

That's because I was playing **Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf** on the IBM PC. This game actually contains 18 of Nicklaus' favorite PGA holes as well as two courses of his own design—Castle Pines, CO and Desert Mountain, AZ. You can play for strokes, or play the skins game, for imaginary (unfortunately) money per hole; you can even set the amount.

Before each hole, Jack offers a short piece of advice or history. For instance, he describes the 10th hole in his greatest 18 (which is also the 10th at Augusta) as the "Longest Par 4 in Major Championship Golf". Jack's comment is followed by an overhead view of the hole, complete with water hazards, bunkers, trees and the like.

After viewing the hole, you step up to the tee. The controls for choosing the club and aligning the direction of the shot (to compensate for wind or to choose a different approach) are simple arrow keys. You press the space bar once to set the swing in motion (watching a power scale on the left of the screen), then again to complete the

swing and make impact with the ball. If your third press is early or late according to the baseline on the scale, the ball will hook or slice.

Beginners will do well to try the driving range or the practice green before playing, and you can practice any hole on the course before actually playing a round. But once you have mastered the basics, each hole is a special challenge.

What's especially fun about this game is that you never play exactly the same way twice. Sometimes you'll make a 40 foot chip shot; other times you'll miss it by an ant's breath. It's even easy to hit the pin, and, with some skill and luck, to make a hole in one on a par 3 hole! The game is full of realistic touches that give you a satisfying sense of success when you do well.

Putting is a special challenge. You have to read the break (which, like the wind on longer shots is presented on a direction indicator). You also have to line up the shot accurately and put just the right amount of power into your putt. I found it easy enough to miss a 4-foot putt, but sometimes I sank a 35 foot monster (to great rejoicing).

Before you begin, you must identify one of 54 hole diagrams from a Nocopi pamphlet (Nocopi is the stuff you can't duplicate on a copier). That's the only copy protection (meaning you can easily copy the game on a hard disk). Next, choose the course to play, then choose what kind of

player to be. For instance, you can play as a male or female, drive from one of three tees (pros, men's or women's), and play expert (club is chosen for you) or beginner (computer chooses your club and tells you its normal range).

You can play alone, or in a group of 2, 3, or 4. You can also choose some computer players to round out your group, or play against friends. The computer players range from experts like the great Jack N himself, to real rank beginners who hit balls all over the course! If winning is your thrill, play one of the computer novices. You'll stand a good chance of winning, even if you do blow a lot of putts. Oh, and if you get called away in the middle of a round, you can save it to disk and continue later.

The graphics are very good, especially at EGA resolution. The colorful fairways are well drawn, and each spot on the course is faithfully reproduced, even the parts where your ball is surrounded by trees! You see the shadow of the ball on high iron shots, and also watch the ball bounce and roll at the end of a shot. And if it lands in a water hazard or bunker, you see the not-so-satisfying splash of water or sand.

And, if you're interested in knowing how an expert would play the 18 Greatest Holes, there is even a video available of Nicklas showing you the way. You can find it at local sporting goods stores and other outlets.

I guess what I like best about this game is that it is very easy to play, but rewarding when you do well. The effort is in the strategy and timing, not in remembering a lot of commands. There is enough skill and luck in the game to make it fun, but you don't have to sweat a lot of details to enjoy yourself.



Name: JACK NICKLAUS' GREATEST 18 HOLES OF MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF
Type: Sports Simulation
Formats: IBM
Publisher: Accolade
Designers: Ned Martin, Sculptured Software
Ages: 10 to Adult
Requirements: IBM, CGA, EGA, Hercules MGA, Tandy 16 Color; 384K required
*** Players:** 1-4
Price: \$49.95
(Commodore 64/128 version \$29.95)

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Very Good (8.8)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.2)
Playability: Excellent (9.2)

CP RATINGS: 8.98
Circle Reader Service Number 17.



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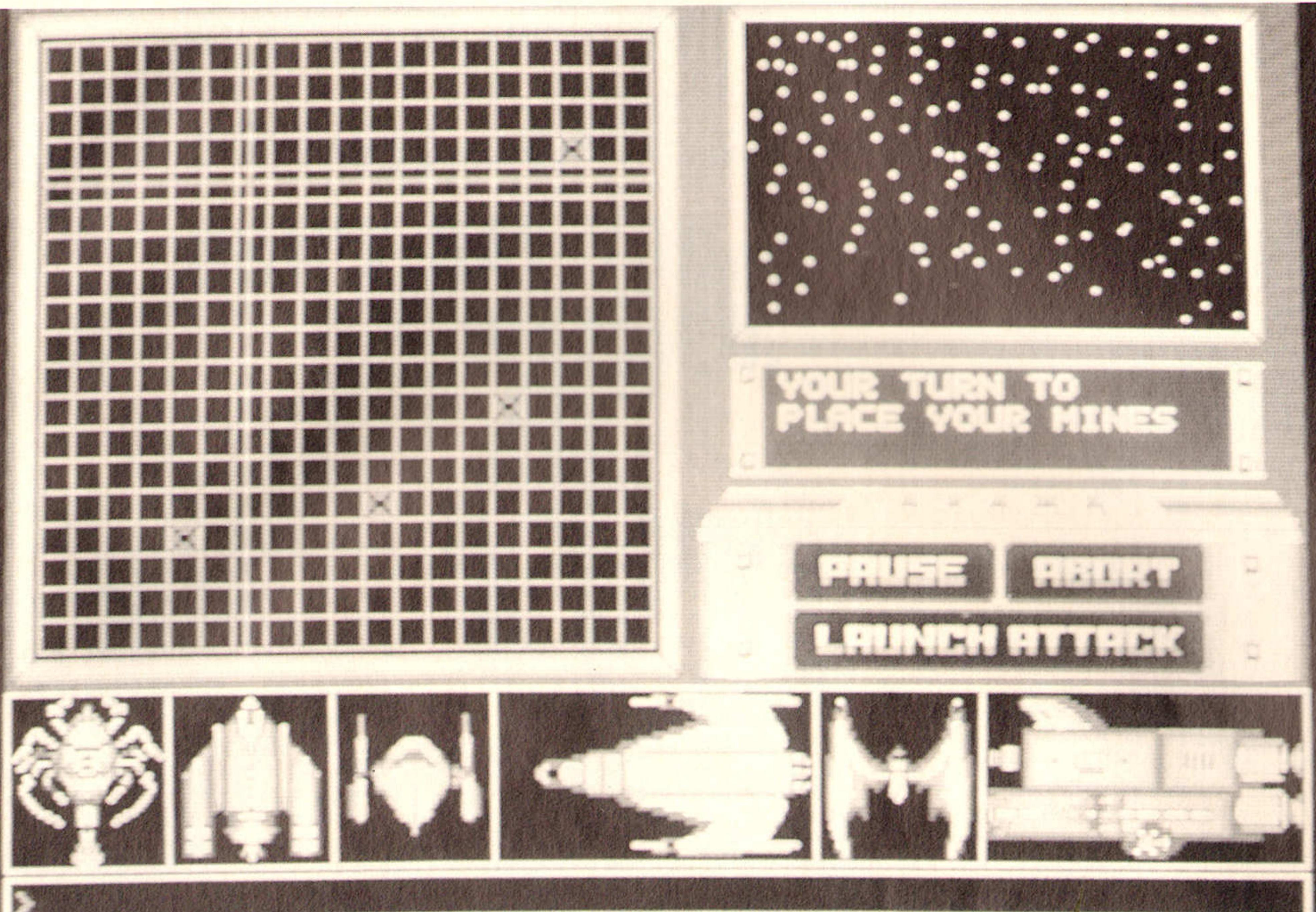
You take the controls of MagMax, the giant robot warrior, and fight a three-headed mechanical space monster trying to destroy the human race. A beam gun and magic black bullets help you fight 30 different enemies.

In Seicross, you race a super space bike through an army of enemy suicide bikers. Gather Energy Packs to keep your bike and laser beam energized as you attack the Dinosaur Tank and rescue the captive Petras people.

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Sector Grid from Kosmic Krieg.

By John S. Manor

Battleship is one of those classic boardgames that everyone has played at one time or another. **Kosmic Krieg**, from Alpha Tech Computers, is a battleship game set in deep space that adds a few new twists to this time-honored game and brings it right into today's (and maybe tomorrow's) computerized world.

In Kosmic Krieg, you and your opponent each have an armada of drone ships that you control from your mother ship. You are competing for the right to colonize the few planets in the galaxy that will support humanoid life. You meet head to head and take turns launching laser bolts at each other's drones. Up to this point Kosmic Krieg is a graphically pleasing and fun-to-play version of Battleship.

"Then what's so special about this game?" you may ask. "There are other battleship games for my computer". Well, Kosmic Krieg is special, and I'll explain why. Kosmic Krieg allows you to play by modem against a friend or against bbs (bulletin board system) computer, as well as playing it against your computer or against a human opponent on your computer. That makes

it a rather flexible and useful piece of software and not 'just another battleship game'.

I first played Kosmic Krieg in one player mode against the computer. The computer plays a tough game and you have to use your best strategy to beat it. I've played many times, and I'm still barely winning half of them.

There are four main variations to Kosmic Krieg. You can play Barrage, Five Shot, Barrage with asteroids or Five Shot with asteroids. Barrage gives you one shot for each drone-piece you have on the playing grid, for a maximum of twenty-six shots. As your opponent (computer or human, in the same room or across the country) scores hits on your drones, you lose shots for your next turn. Conversely, the more hits you have against his drones, the better for your armada the next time he bombards it. The Five Shot game gives both players five shots for each turn, no matter how many pieces you have left. I think this probably makes for a more even game as well as a slower game. Finally, you can tell the game to put asteroids randomly on the grid in either style of game. This will confuse and confound players by making them think they've scored a hit when they are just pounding rocks.

Kosmic Krieg is easy to use and learn, with simple menu selections that you click on with the mouse. The main menu displays three options: Communications, Start Game and Statistics. When you select Start Game the playing screen appears.

The graphics of the playing screen in Kosmic Krieg are sharp and well organized. On the left side of the screen is the playing grid. On the right side is a view of deep space. The bottom of the screen shows pictures of each of the drones that make up your space armada. On the middle right are buttons to pause or abort the game and a button to launch your attacks. Above this is a computer display window where you will see important messages during the game.

Here's a hint: The pictures of the drone fleets will show hits on them by fragmenting and burning. This is a nice graphic touch that can help you figure out where to launch your next attack. Each drone has a distinct shape and a certain number of pieces. If you know which drone you just hit, then you may know where the rest of its pieces are.

Burn Drug Pushers and their Stash

By Rusel DeMaria and George R. Fontaine

The war against drugs is in full swing these days as the media blitz against street narcotics and other substances continues to escalate. Several games have picked up on the trend in recent times, and Broderbund's **Operation: Clean Streets** is among them.

To begin with, if you're expecting a realistic police simulation, forget it. Clean Streets plays a lot more like some vigilante adventure. It's an arcade-style punch'em-kick'em featuring little in the way of strategy. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to rid the city streets of all kinds of drugs, starting with ordinary caffeine (level 1) and going through cocaine (level 3), heroine (level 4) and finally, something called aradoine (which must be arcade games?).

You play "Cleanup" Harry, a tough young cop on the move. However, it looks as if you've left your badge and gun back at the station when you donned your street clothes. In this mission, you use your fists and feet to beat up street punks and drug pushers, confiscating their stashes. It

would be somewhat more realistic if you at least waited until you observed a drug deal taking place, or until one of the pushers actually solicited you. But in this game, you basically beat up everyone you meet. I'm afraid Harry would spend more time in front of Internal Affairs than out on the streets.

The game would also be more interesting if you could explore some of the buildings, using your undercover skills to find the pushers.

As it is, it takes little effort to meet an unpleasant assortment of enemies, including a chainsaw-wielding thug, a whip cracking lady, and a few martial arts types armed with shirokins, numchucks, and swords. To make things worse, people frequently chuck garbage out their windows at you. You aren't working in the classy part of town!

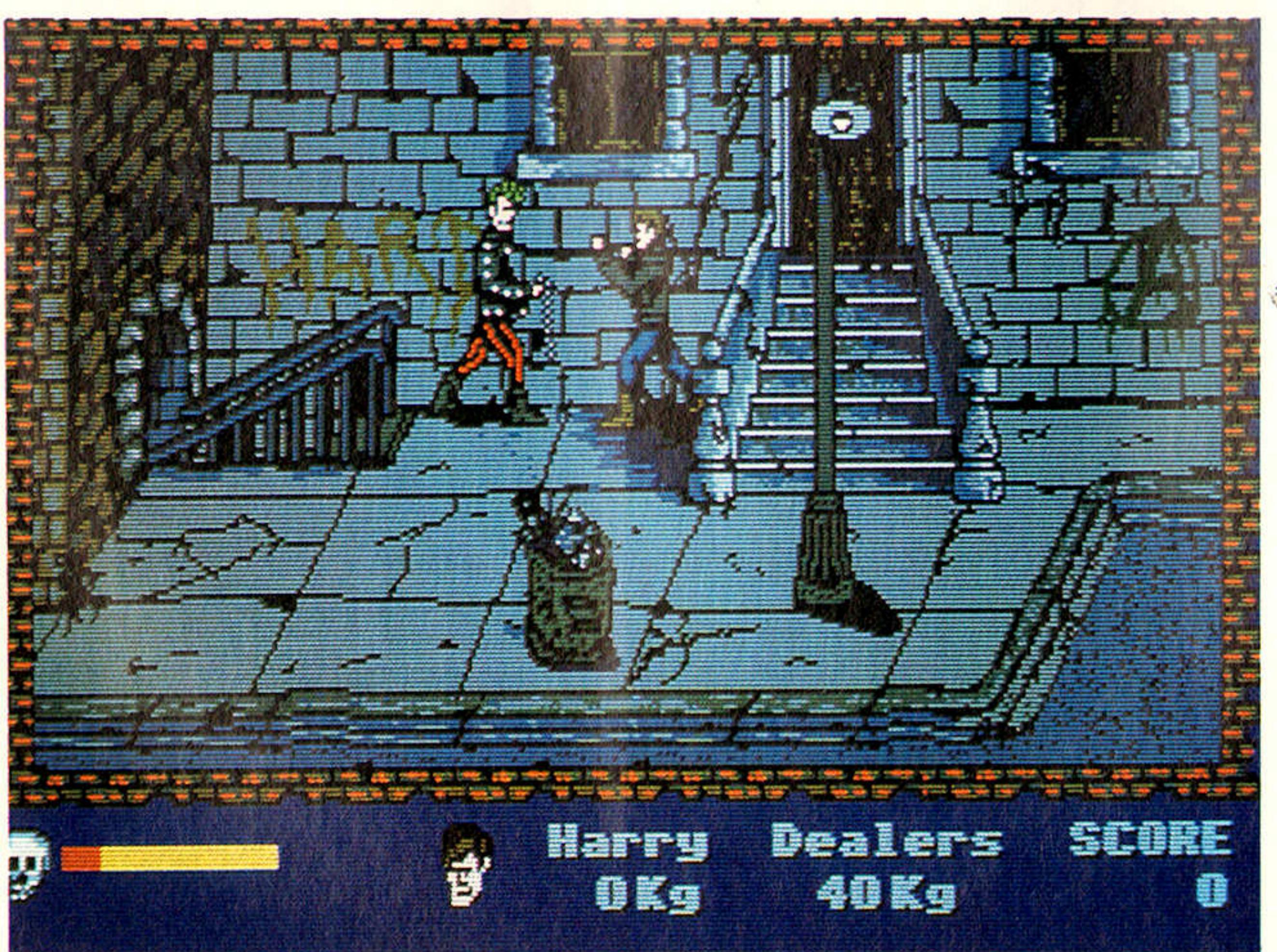
It may sound tough, but it isn't really hard at first. But as you play the higher levels, you meet more enemies, and they are more aggressive. In time, you'll need to make it to the burning garbage can where you dispose of the drug haul (so much for the evidence room). However, when you burn the confiscated drugs, you regain some

of your energy (which is lost whenever you are hit by an enemy or pelted by flying garbage).

The graphics in this game are OK; in fact, they are quite good for CGA. Unfortunately, the game doesn't support EGA modes, so I still feel that the graphics could be better. Also, playing the game with a joystick is generally smooth, but not always. You have to get used to turning Harry around; I often found him kicking backward when I wanted him to turn.

The fighting sequences are fairly well animated, but the only real challenge comes when you have to fight more than one enemy at a time. One on one, you can quickly master any of the opponents in the game with a few simple tricks. But as the levels increase, the opponents become more numerous, more aggressive, and more subtle. You also have to confiscate greater amounts of stash to complete the level, making it even harder.

All in all, **Operation: Clean Streets** is an enjoyable game, but we were somewhat disappointed that it didn't take the undercover cop story a little further, and that it didn't feature a more realistic treatment of the subject. As an arcade game, it is interesting and sometimes fun. There are several little tricks in the game that you can discover that add to its appeal. In the final analysis, however, it is like many other games—well programmed, fast paced, and fun, but not earthshaking.



Fighting a pusher off the streets in **Operation Clean Streets**.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name: | OPERATION CLEAN STREETS |
| Type: | Arcade Action |
| Formats: | IBM PC |
| Publisher: | Broderbund Software |
| Designers: | Silmaris |
| Ages: | Teens |
| Requirements: | at least 1 floppy disk; DOS 2.1 or higher; 512K; Joystick optional. |
| # Players: | One |
| Price: | \$34.95 |
| Ability Level: | Beginner |
| Packaging: | Very Good (8.2) |
| Documentation: | Good (8) |
| Graphics/Text: | Good (8) |
| Playability: | Average (7.5) |
| CP RATINGS: | 7.77 |
| Circle Reader Service Number 18. | |

► 19

Before you start to play, you type in your name. The game keeps track of your wins and losses, your winning percentage and your skill rating. You can check your overall record by clicking on Statistics at the first menu. You can also print out statistics for any player.

You start play by placing mines around your enemy's grid. You get five mines. Mines and shots are placed on the grid by moving a set of crosshairs with the mouse. This is a convenient method that has a nice feel to it.

Your mines explode and you then place all your shots strategically on the grid. When you are done, you click on the box labeled "launch attack". Laser beams reach out into space towards your opponent's armada. If you hit a drone, that square on the grid turns orange. If you miss, the square turns white. When your attack is completed, it's your opponent's turn.

I have always loved using a modem with my computer. It's a great way to meet other computerists with the same interests. To play Kosmic Krieg by modem, you and a friend connect through the simple Comm-Link communications program included in the game. The Comm-Link program is set up for Hayes-compatible modems running at 300, 1300 or 2400 baud. Other modems can also be used.

Once connected, both players have to agree on the same game options or it won't work. For example, you both have to choose Five Shot without asteroids. Both players also have to be at the same baud rate.

Now the fun really begins. Both players place their drones and mines. You take turns designing and launching attacks until only one of you stands victorious amidst the smoke and cosmic debris.

Here's another hint: There's an input line in Kosmic Krieg that lets you and your opponent send messages back and forth while you play. You can hurl invectives at your opponent, insult him, tell him he couldn't hit the broad side of a

black hole and so on. If you happen to be losing (and even if you aren't), you can send messages while he is setting up to attack. The messages will pop up on his playing grid, making it impossible for him to place shots. This way you can harass him into making mistakes (hopefully fatal).

You can also play Kosmic Krieg on a bbs where the sysop has a Kosmic Krieg shell installed. Alpha Tech has made the shell available as shareware. This means if you use it and like it, you send in a donation (\$15.00 is suggested). Sending the donations entitles you to upgrades on Kosmic Krieg. (You must own the game to play it on a bbs). The shell works with bbs programs that can run outside programs. The manual lists BBS Express!, F.o.R.e.M. ST, and StarNET as examples of bbs programs that will run the Kosmic Krieg shell.

I played Kosmic Krieg both on Alphatech's bbs and on a bbs in my area. On a bbs you would see a menu that offers Instructions, View today's players or Play Kosmic Krieg. You enter your name and a password. Your won-loss record is displayed (if you've played the bbs before). You choose Two player-modem from a game menu and select the variation of game you wish to play (Barrage, etc.). Your armada is launched and you play the game line on your own computer. The bbs is tough to beat. It also heckles you during the game.

When you finish the game, your record is updated. If you have one of the ten best records on the bbs, your name will be displayed on the opening screen along with your record.

You may be thinking that it's a drawback for both players to have to own the game to play online. Well, if a sysop adds Kosmic Krieg to his bbs, there will be lots of new opponents to challenge you. Call up your local bbs and ask the sysop to get the Kosmic Krieg shell. Before you know it, maybe there'll be a message base just for Kosmic Krieg-ers challenging each other to see who's top gun, swaggering online and bragg-

Name: KOSMIC KRIEG
Type: Arcade/Strategy
Formats: Atari ST. Versions for IBM, Apple and Amiga coming soon.
Publisher: Alpha Tech Computers
Designers: Tom Zemlin, Roger Hamilton and Roger Hardy
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor, Modem for modem-play
Players: One or Two or by modem or bbs
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Good (7.5)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Good (7.5)
Realism: Good (7.5)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATINGS: 8.06
Circle Reader Service Number 25.

"Wargame Of The Century"™

by Walter Bright & Mark Baldwin

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Circle Reader Service Number 42.

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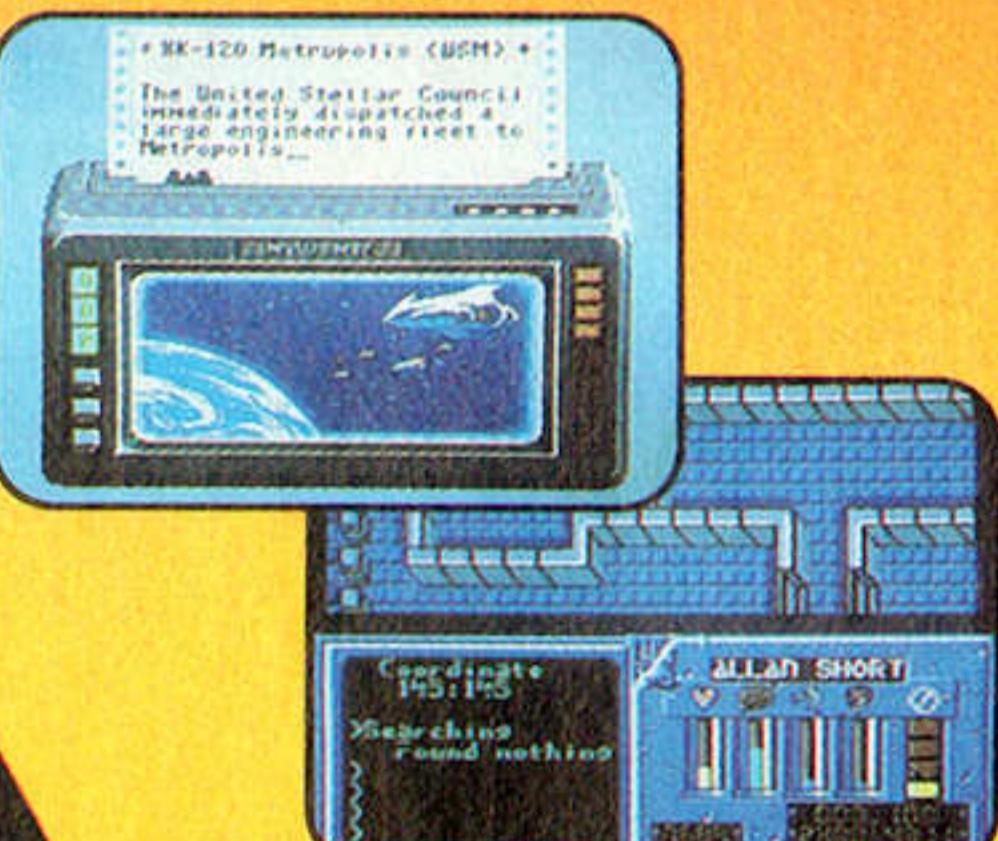
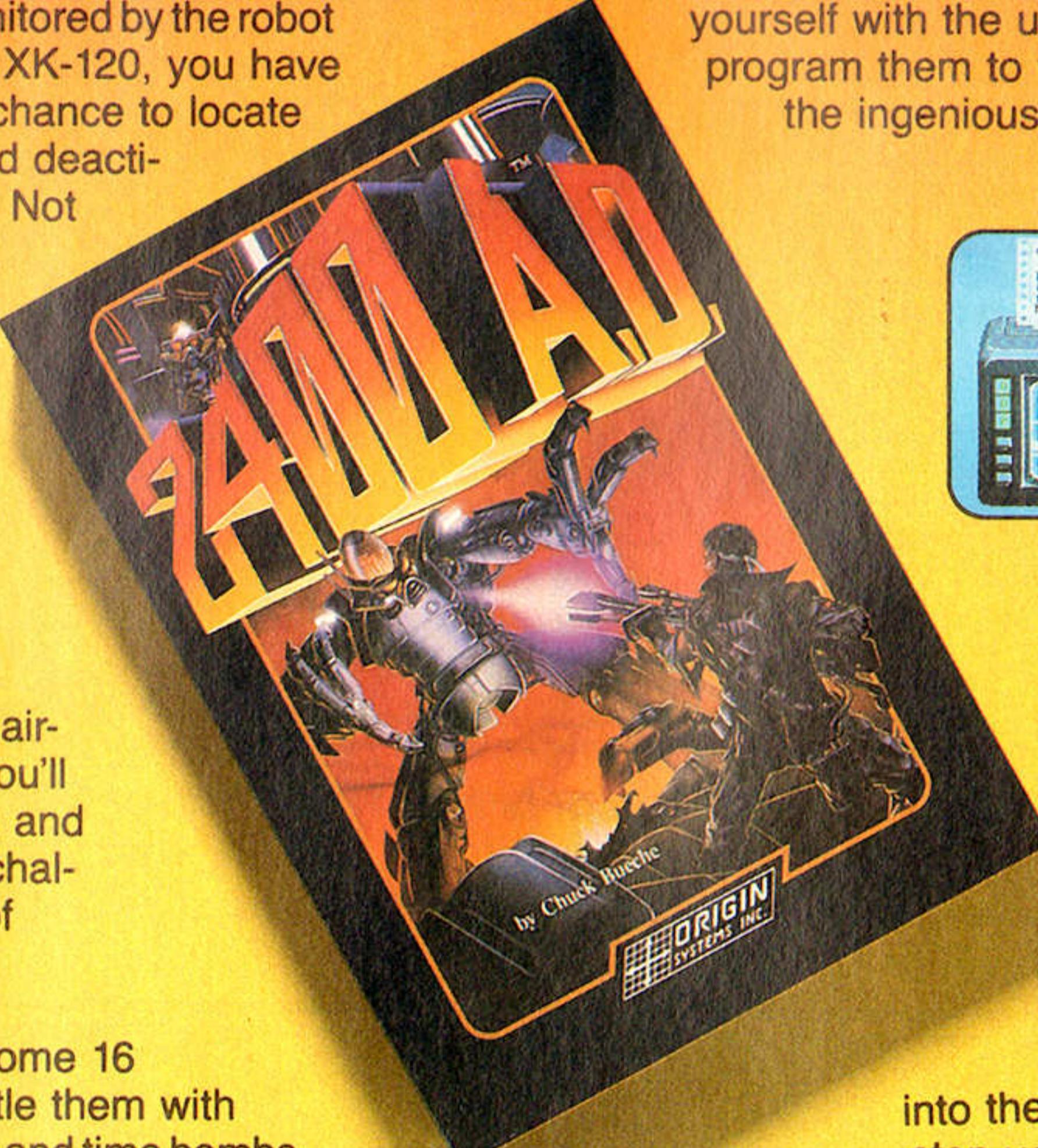
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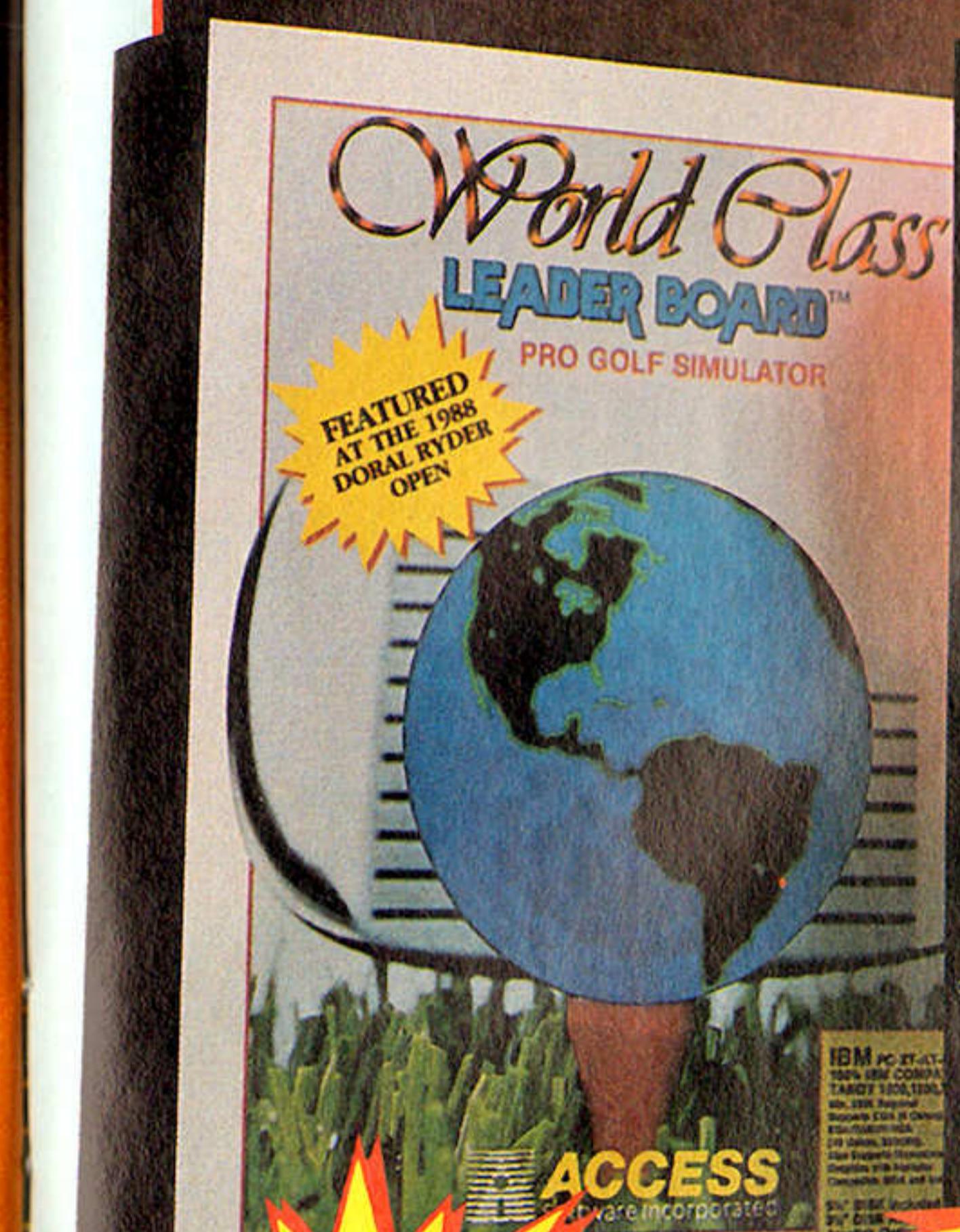
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C-64/128, AMIGA, IBM PC, APPLE II SERIES, MACINTOSH



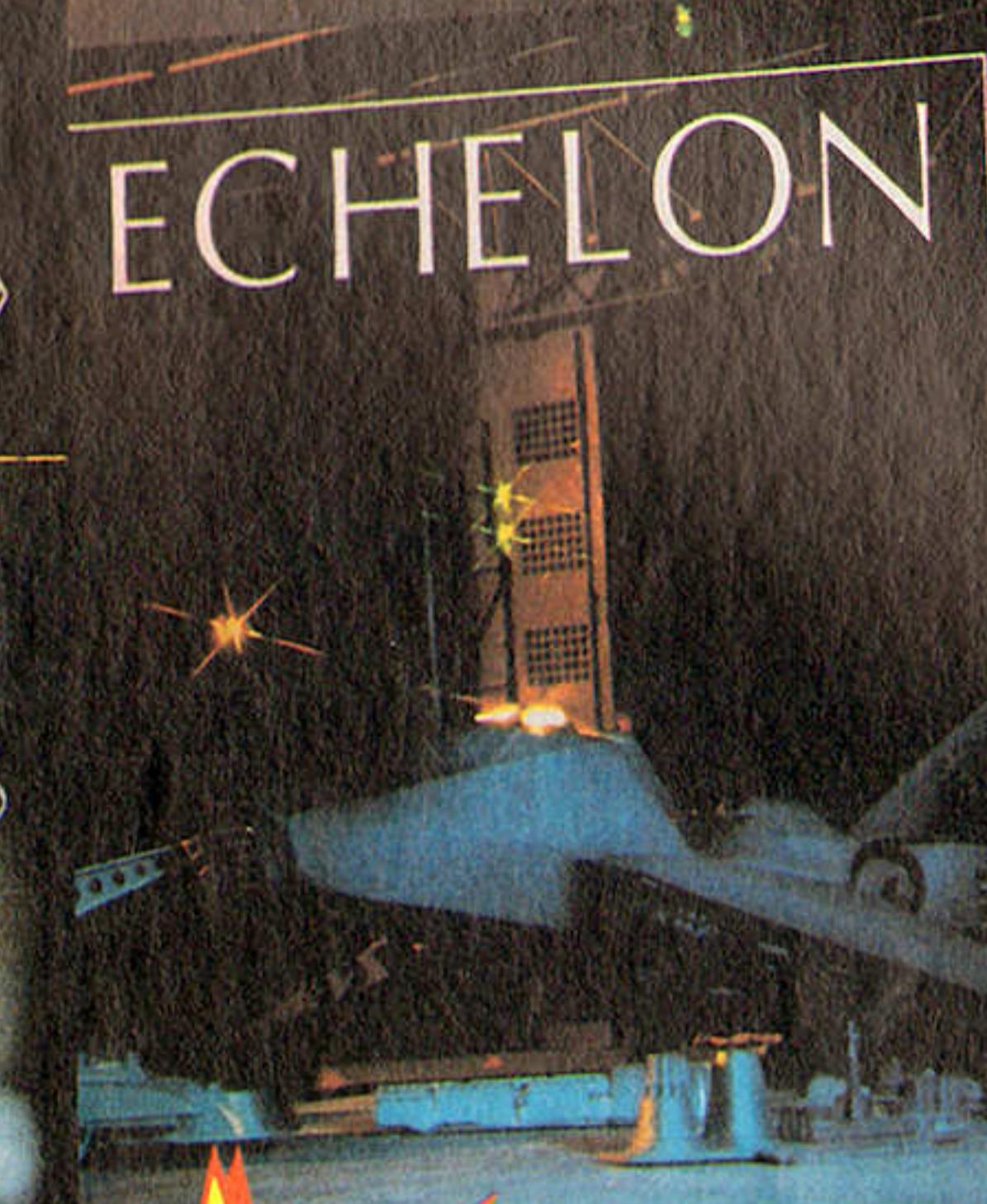
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C-64/128, AMIGA, IBM PC, APPLE II SERIES, MACINTOSH



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Caving In to Primitive Urges



By Berdj Betchakdjian

When I was asked to review *Caveman Ugh-Lympics*, I was a little skeptical about it. I thought it was going to be a boring arcade-type game with endless screens, and unattainable goals. On the drive home, though, I looked at the back of the box the game came in and I started to laugh right in the middle of rush hour, not an easy chore.

Well, I was right about one thing only, it is an arcade type game, but it is enjoyable, and the player can finish every 'event' without too much trouble. The trouble is that you have to get better to get those scores up and win.

The designers of this game kept one thing in mind; fun. This game is enjoyable from the minute you look at the back of the box, to

reading the little newspaper that's included in the package called Ugh-Zaminer.

So, let's look at the game itself, now. There are six events in the Ugh-lympics: the mate toss, dino race, fire making, clubbing, saber race, and the dino vault. You can choose, from the options screen, to practice or to start the games. If you choose to practice, you go to another screen to pick the event you want to practice. If, however, you choose to start the games, then you play all the events one after the other—it doesn't take long to finish the game, so don't think it will take hours.

Now, let's look at the events. In the mate toss, you grab your mate by the foot then you start to spin. You go faster, and faster by turning the joystick counter clockwise, then you let go and watch your mate fly across the screen to one of

the distance markers. Don't accelerate too fast though, because you can get out of control and start wobbling. And don't spin too long, if you do, you'll get tired, turn red, and your distance won't be that good. Once your mate lands, you'll know if you did well or not by the body gestures of your mate.

The dino race is you against another player, or against the computer. You start the race spurring your dino a little, then you can turbo-tap him to get him to jump over rocks, or just to get him to go a little faster. If you club your dino too much, he'll belly flop, and it takes time to get him up and running, don't club him enough, and he gets lazy.

When fire making, you have to rub two sticks together faster and faster until embers start falling into your kindling. Once you have some

embers, you can start blowing until smoke starts to appear from the tinder. Watch out for the other player though, he just might decide to use his stick to bop you on the head instead. So if you see the Ugh-lympian stop, duck before he swings that stick.

Clubbing is the next event. You fight another Ugh-lympian on a raised platform of stone. You first go through the intimidation phase where both players swing their clubs wildly to frighten the other guy. You try to divert the other guy's attention by pointing to the sky, when he looks, bonk that fool. You can also duck and knock him in the knees: do it three times and he may run backwards off the platform. The player remaining on the platform wins.

The saber race can be a little frightening, especially if the other player doesn't like you. If you trip the other guy while you're both running from the saber tooth tiger, it'll keep the tiger busy enough for you to take a rest, and give the poor creature a little snack. But look out, it doesn't take long for that cat to finish a snack and start looking for a main dish. You have to keep running just ahead of the tiger, looking for a tree to climb on, and safely stay in until the next event.

The dino vault will test your ability well. First,

you can set the height of the dino before you begin your jump. If you want to make a higher jump, the cave guy on the dino's head will tempt him with a huge steak at the end of a pole. If you want a lower jump, the same guy will jump up and down on the dino's head to lower him a couple of feet. The next step is making your run at the dino. Start your run, then keep pulling the joystick back and forth to the rhythm of your running feet. When you get to the dino, plant your pole and sail over him. But look out, if you land in the dino's mouth, you're in for a hard time; first because the dino will take a taste of you, then he'll spit you out because he thinks your clothes taste better than you do.

Once you're done playing the game, you should take a look at the Ugh-zaminer. A lot of time has been put in this modest publication and it is funny. There are some articles in it written like it was a prehistoric paper, and there are some mock advertisements in it also in the same style. One of the articles has the headline 'Threat of Terrorist Gorillas at this Year's Games' is an example of the bent of this game. The personal section has some interesting people looking for, ugh, mates. The Ugh-zaminer is well worth reading because it sets the mood for the whole game.

The game itself is excellent. The graphics are great, the events are funny, and the whole concept is well thought out. Overall, games like this are few and far in between, and I hope I'll see some more games with a funny twist to them since enjoyment is what gaming is about, not accumulating points. If I had to describe this unique game in one word, it would have to be Ughly.

Name: CAVEMAN UGH-LYMPICS

Type: Arcade

Formats: C64/128

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Designer: Greg Johnson

Ages: 10 & up

Requirements: Joystick, Disk Drive

* Players: One to Six

Price: \$29.95

Ability Level:

Intermediate

Packaging:

Good (8)

Documentation:

Very Good (8.5)

Graphics:

Very Good (9)

Realism:

Very Good (9)

Playability:

Excellent (9.5)

CP RATINGS:

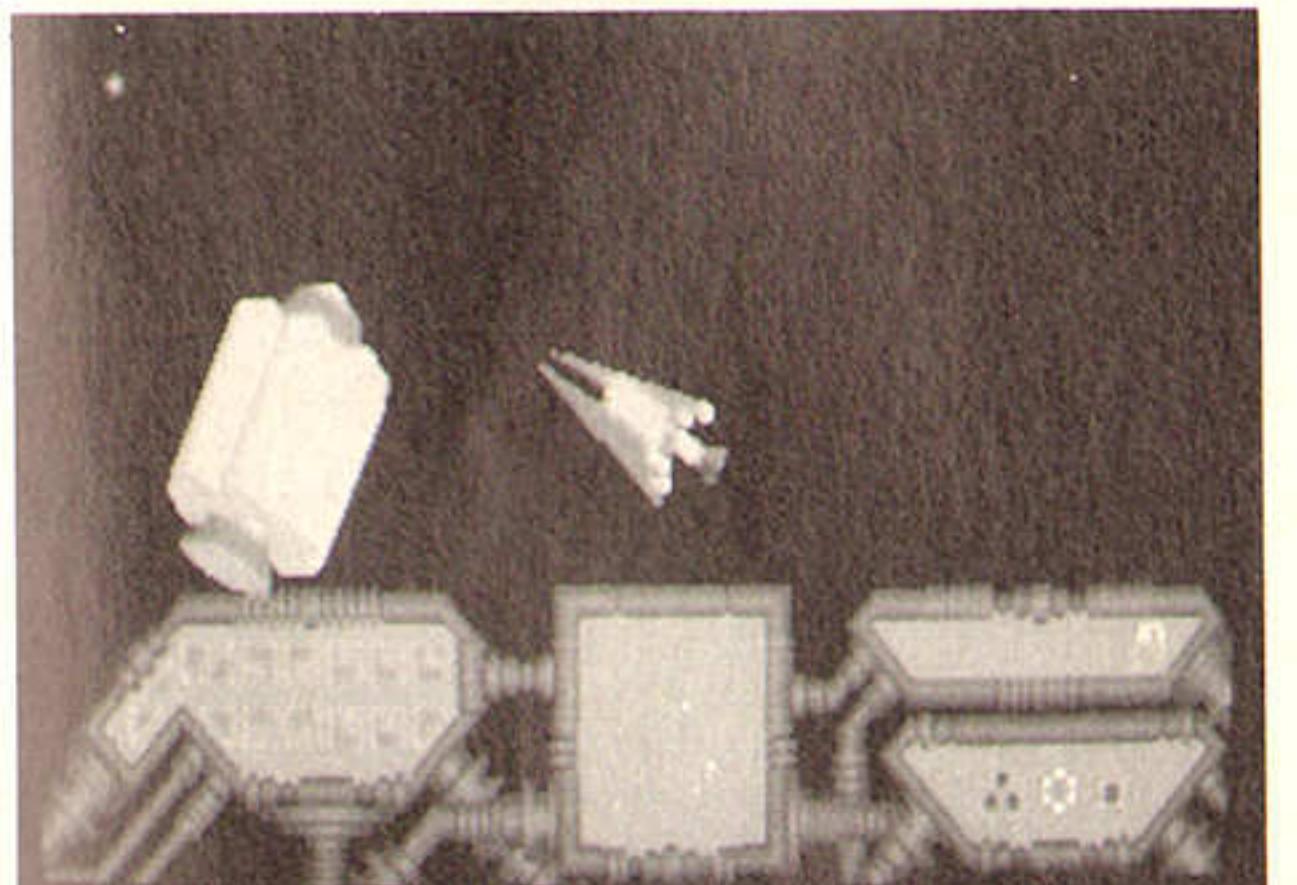
9.08

Circle Reader Service Number 27.

Five Perfect Solids to 1988

By John S. Manor

Space Cutter is a new arcade game from Rainbird that takes you out into space and through thousands of interconnected universes. You fly an advanced needle-nosed spacecraft. Your goal is to open a timegate back to Earth in the golden age of 1988 and escape the mechanical beings who have enslaved humanity. You do this by exploring the thousands of universes or 'eigenspaces' to find the five 'perfect solids': three-dimensional rotating shapes. Giant spinning wheels called space gates are your means for getting from one universe to the next. Drag the



Searching the universe for perfect solids in *Space Cutter*.

perfect solids through them and you will escape back to Earth.

Your mission isn't an easy one. The enemy will try to stop you with a variety of ships. Fortunately you have missiles and chaff pods with which to fight back. Your missiles will home in on a nearby enemy. But be careful! If there is no enemy, your missile will circle around and go up your own tail pipe! (It is best to have the enemy ship right in front of you when you fire.) You also get four chaff pods that will seek out and destroy the nearest enemy ship. You start with twelve ship 'hulls' to complete your mission.

You control your ship with the mouse. You have limited fuel and ammo. There are depots for fuel, ammo and chaff pods scattered throughout the universes. Fly close to one of these and you are resupplied.

I found playing *Space Cutter* to be addicting fun. However, it is very difficult to control the ship accurately. It is extremely sensitive to movements of the mouse. Many times I made my ship go one way when I meant it to go another. Flying through a stargate is like threading a needle, when your hand keeps shaking. Practice and patience wins the day though.

The graphics in *Space Cutter* are stunning. The depots are three dimensional shaded objects that twirl through space, as is your ship. I paused

Name: SPACE CUTTER

Type: Arcade

Publisher: Rainbird

Designer: Maestrom Games

Ages: 10 & up

Requirements: Color Monitor

* Players: One

Price: \$29.95

Ability Level:

Intermediate

Packaging:

Good (7.5)

Documentation:

Very Good (8.5)

Graphics:

Very Good (9)

Realism:

Very Good (8.5)

Playability:

Very Good (8.5)

CP RATINGS:

8.45

Circle Reader Service Number 28.

Air

Traffic
Control
Simulator

The Underground Rat Race

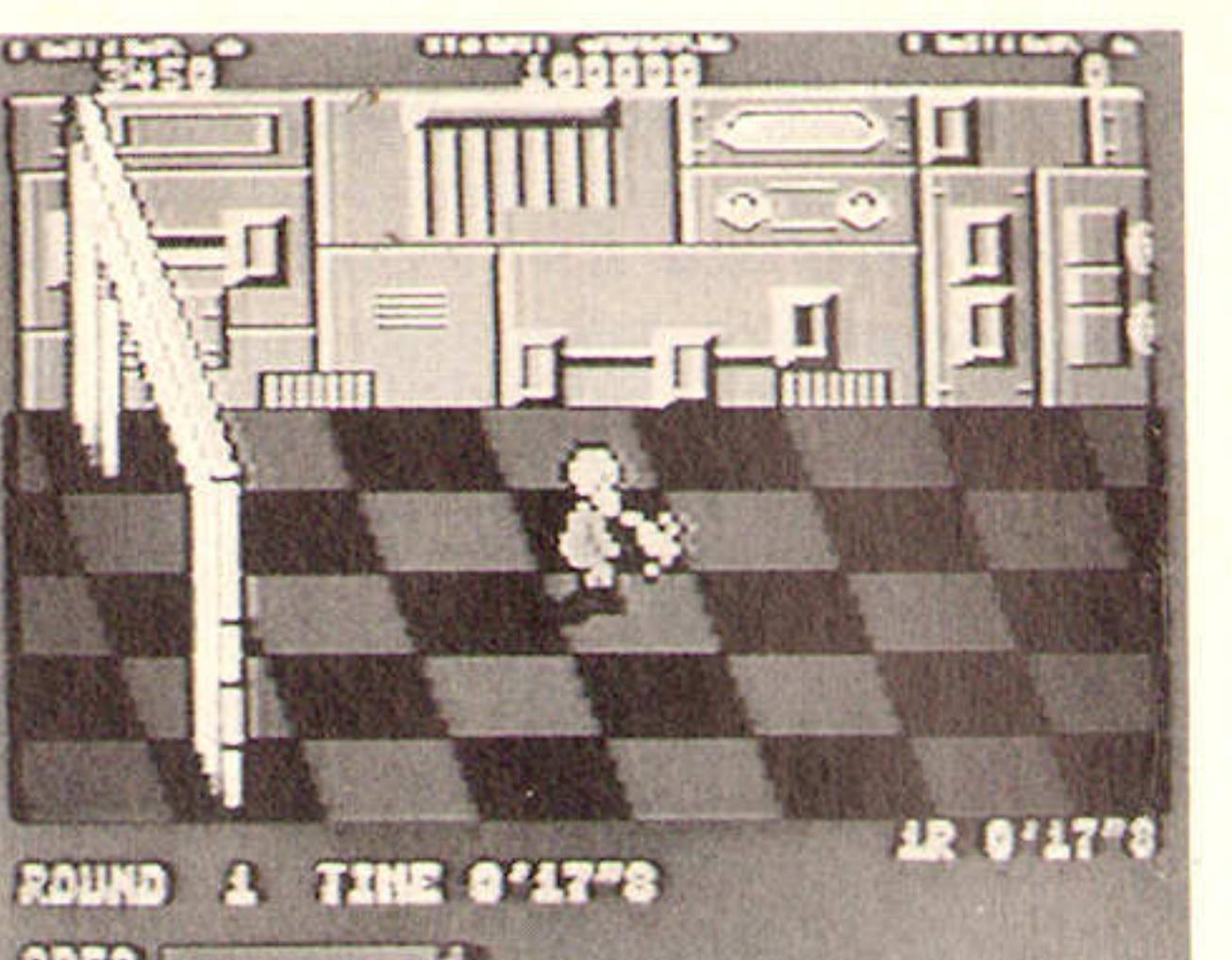
By John S. Manor

In *Metrocross*, from Epyx, you control a helmeted character as he runs through an underground tunnel filled with obstacles such as rolling barrels, cubes and tires, hurdles, green slime tiles and potholes. The object of this footrace is to reach the end of each tunnel before time runs out.

The obstacle courses you encounter are designed to stop you or slow you down at every turn. It takes practice and strategy to get through the tunnel, a section at a time. But I had fun doing it. Each part of the tunnel seems to have a trick to it that you will have to learn.

You control your character with the joystick. There are skateboards scattered along the way that will let you move faster. You can glide right over the green tiles that normally slow you down. Stepping on tin cans stops the clock for a bit and kicking them increases your speed. There are also springboards that you can use to propel yourself forward in an airborne tumblesault, avoiding everything on the ground and saving precious seconds.

I found the best strategy is to keep a steady pace and to avoid tripping over as many obstacles as possible. As you run through the tunnel you must also watch out for rats. They



Underground tunnel from Metrocross.

will try to hold on to you and slow you down. The only way to get rid of them is to run into a barricade or grating. When you reach the finish line (finally), a flourish of music sounds and your character takes a rest, his breath puffing out. Then you move on to the next section of the tunnel.

There seem to be an unlimited number of tunnels, each holding more surprises and challenges. They are all done with smooth scrolling, attractive graphics and fun animation and sound. I particularly like the sound when you get squished by barrels and blasted into the air by the gratings.

The Grass is Greener

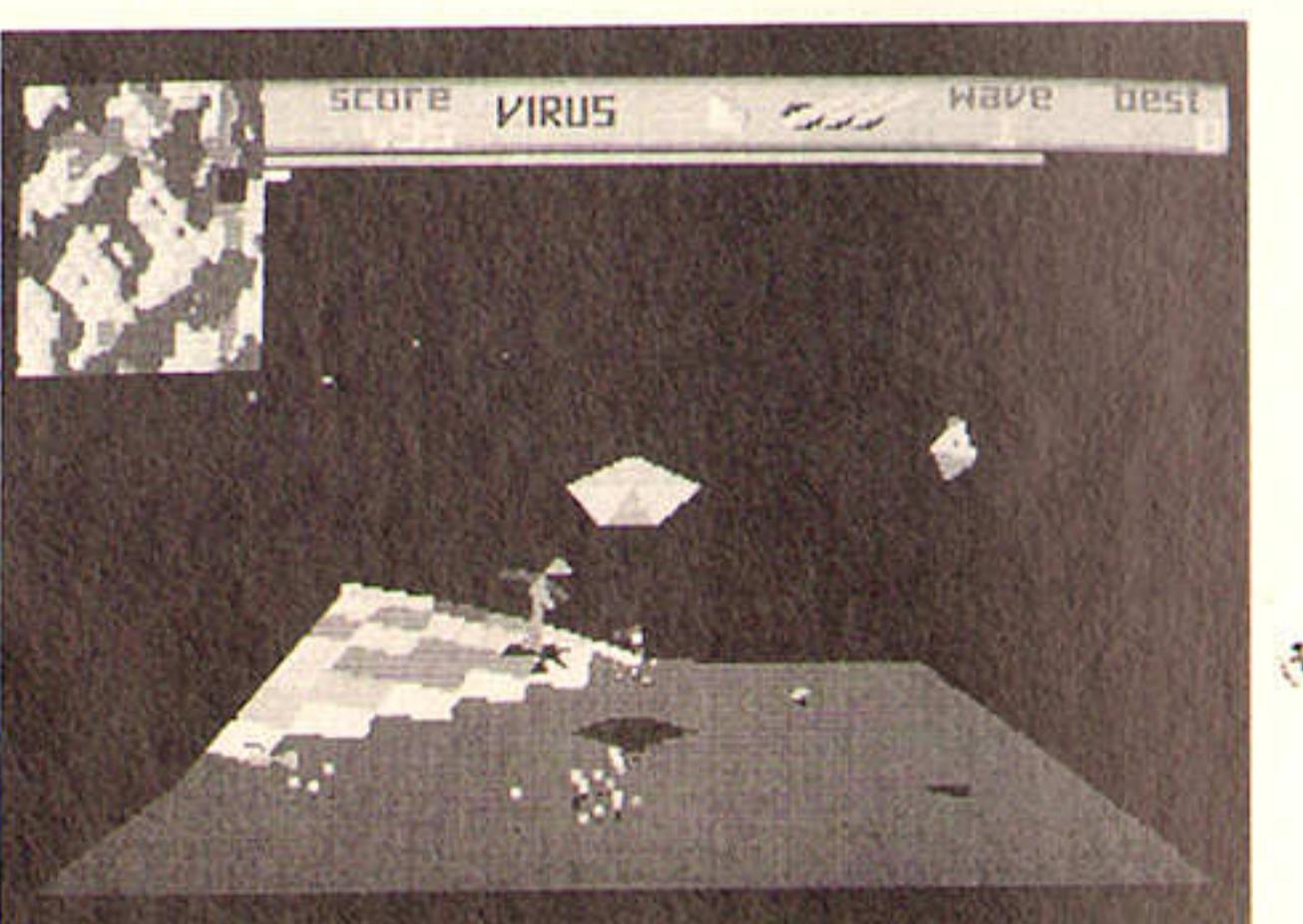
By John S. Manor

Okay, so once again the aliens are invading the Earth. "So what?" you may ask. Well, for one thing, they're spraying a polluting virus around that makes all the green trees and grass turn an ugly shriveled brown. In *Virus*, from Rainbird, you are the pilot of a hoverplane armed with laser cannon and missiles. Your mission is to stamp out those nasty virus-spreading aliens.

You start out at your base; a plain grey platform. Your hoverplane is a wide, swept-wing craft of a bright green color. You control the hoverplane with either a mouse or the keyboard. You raise and lower the nose of the hoverplane and apply thrust to move.

As you fly along, the three-dimensional countryside rolls below. You pass over lakes and rivers, where you see fish swimming. You hear the aliens before you actually see them. A high whining sound means an alien Seeder is nearby, busily spreading the virus. Get close enough and launch a homing missile, but keep an eye (and ear) out for alien fighters.

The display has a long range scanner that shows uninfected areas as green and infected areas as brown. The alien ships show up as colored dots. The number of planes and missiles



Seeder ship spreading germs in Virus.

you have left, your height, and fuel level are also displayed at the top of the screen.

Virus is played in waves, each wave harder than the one before it with more aliens. Your final score is rated from pitiful to acceptable. Scores are not saved to disk, which I thought was a drawback.

Virus would be pretty easy to play, were it not for the way the hoverplane handles. I found it almost impossible to control with the mouse. Using the keyboard gave better control, but it was still difficult to fly and shoot aliens at the same time.

The graphics in *Virus* are excellent. The terrain is a patchwork quilt of bright colors that gives the

Metrocross comes on a single-sided disk with an instruction book for the Atari ST and Commodore. The section on obstacles and time savers will give you some hints on playing the game.

Metrocross is a cool arcade game with an original theme. Sports games like this are a welcome break from shooting aliens and slaying dragons. *Metrocross* is a challenging game with enough variety to keep even the most avid arcade gamer happy for some time.

Name: METROCROSS
Type: Arcade
Formats: Atari ST, C64/128
Publisher: Epyx
Ages: 6 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor, joystick
* **Players:** Two
Price: \$24.95

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Ability Level: | Beginner |
| Packaging: | Good (8) |
| Documentation: | Good (8) |
| Graphics: | Very Good (9) |
| Playability: | Good (8) |

CP RATINGS: 8.25
Circle Reader Service Number 29.

game a unique, cartoon-like appearance. Realistic trees and buildings dot the landscape and the animation is pleasing to watch (including the fishes).

Virus is a good quality arcade game. However, it is also frustratingly hard to play at times. Be assured that you won't be disappointed with *Virus*, but don't expect to rout the aliens and rack up high scores until after a lot of hours of flying practice.

Name: VIRUS
Type: Arcade
Publisher: Rainbird
Designer: David Braben
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor
* **Players:** One
Price: \$29.95

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Ability Level: | Beginner |
| Packaging: | Good (7.5) |
| Documentation: | Good (7.5) |
| Graphics: | Excellent (9.5) |
| Realism: | Excellent (9.5) |
| Playability: | Good (7) |

CP RATINGS: 7.75
Circle Reader Service Number 30.

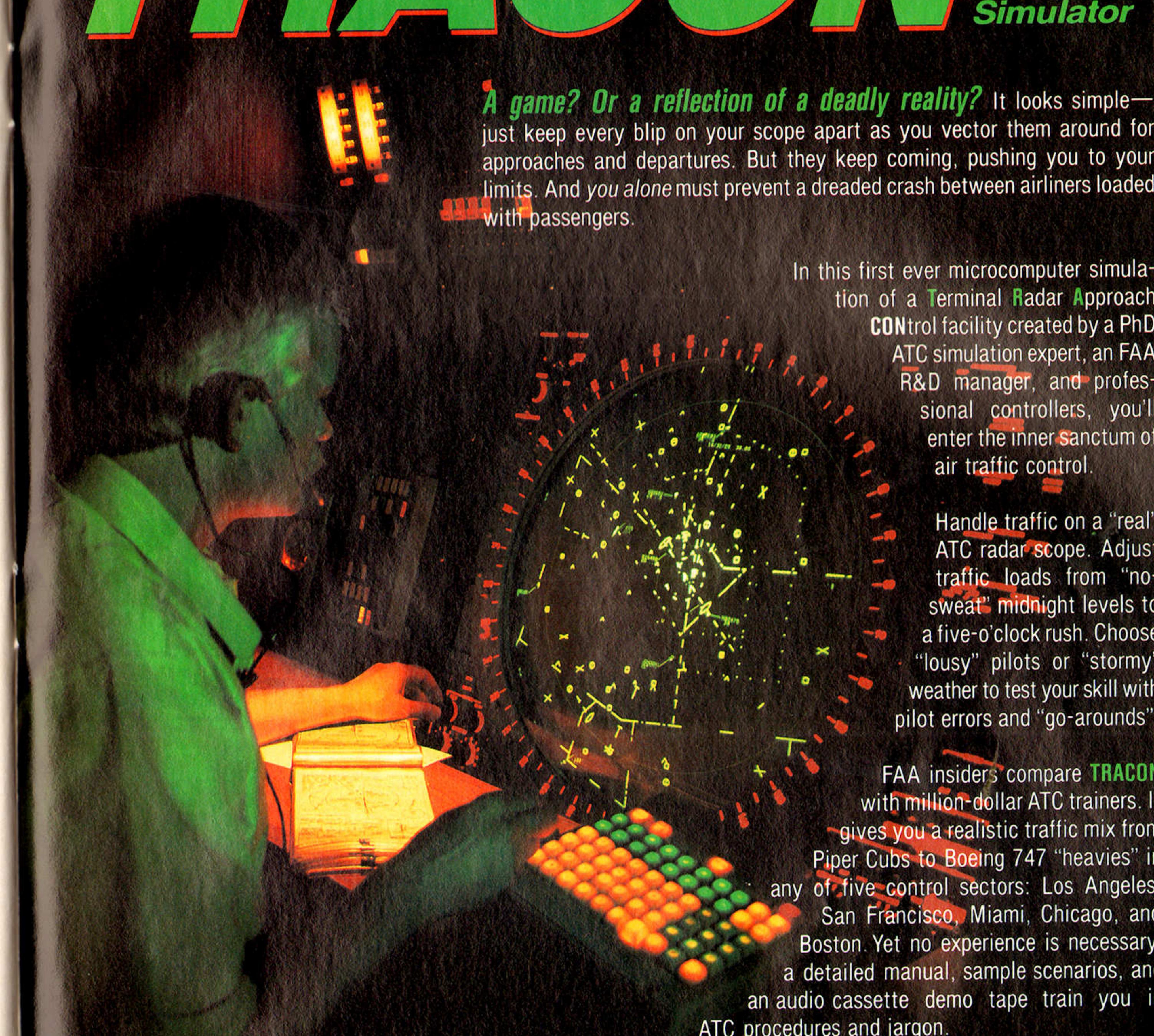
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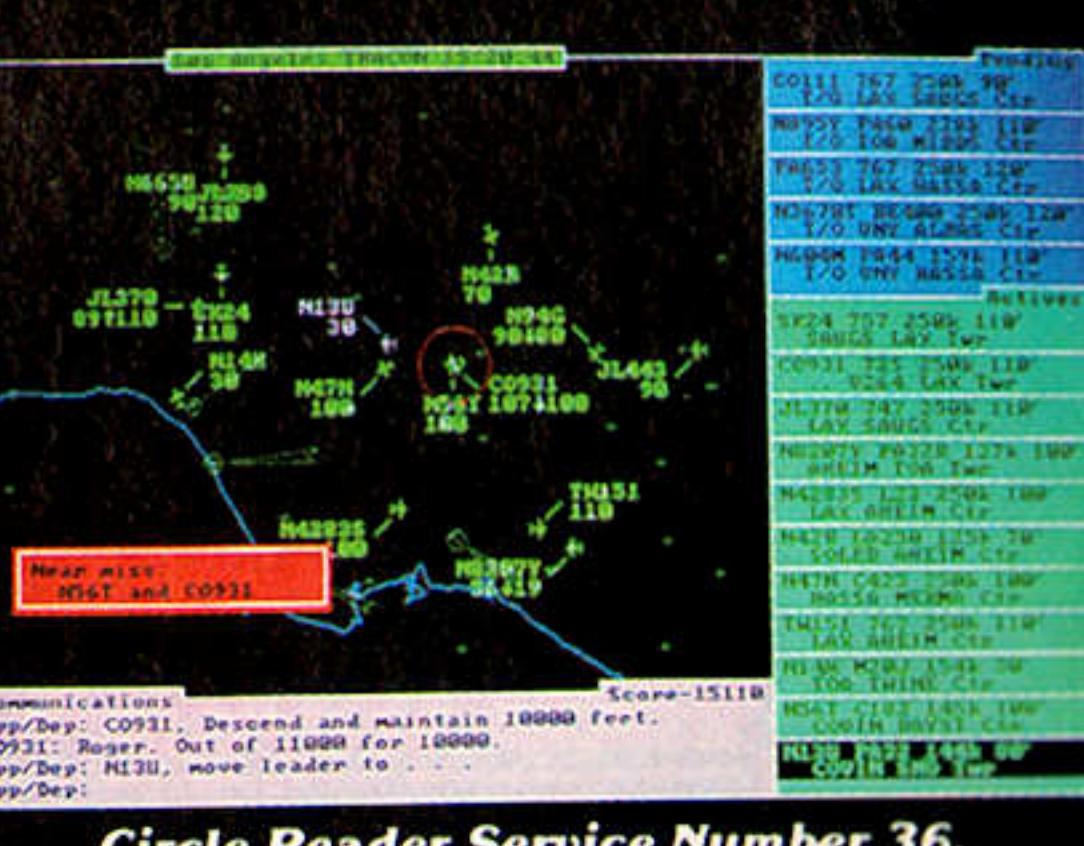


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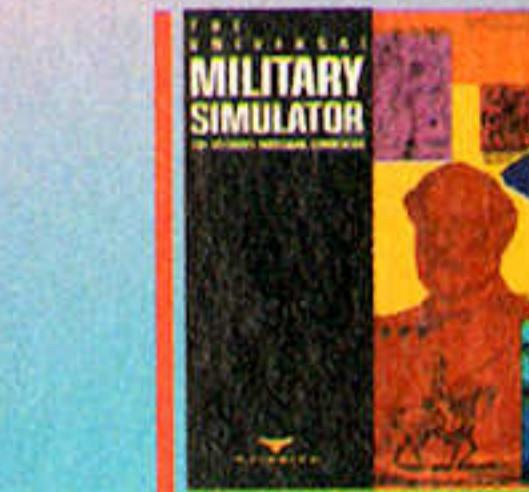
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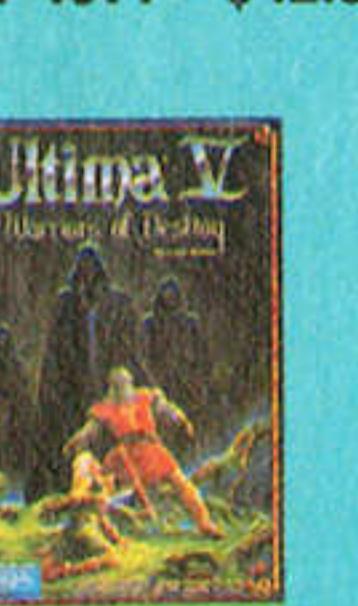
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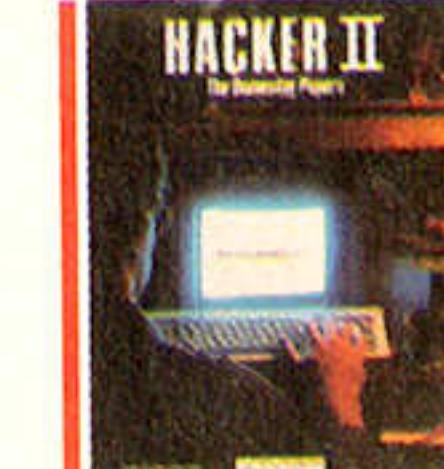
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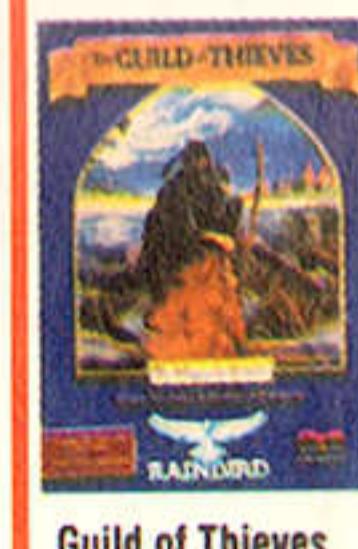
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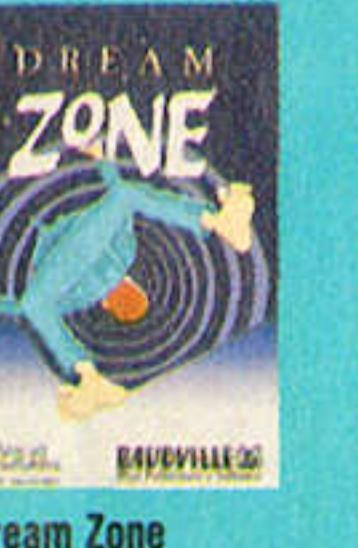
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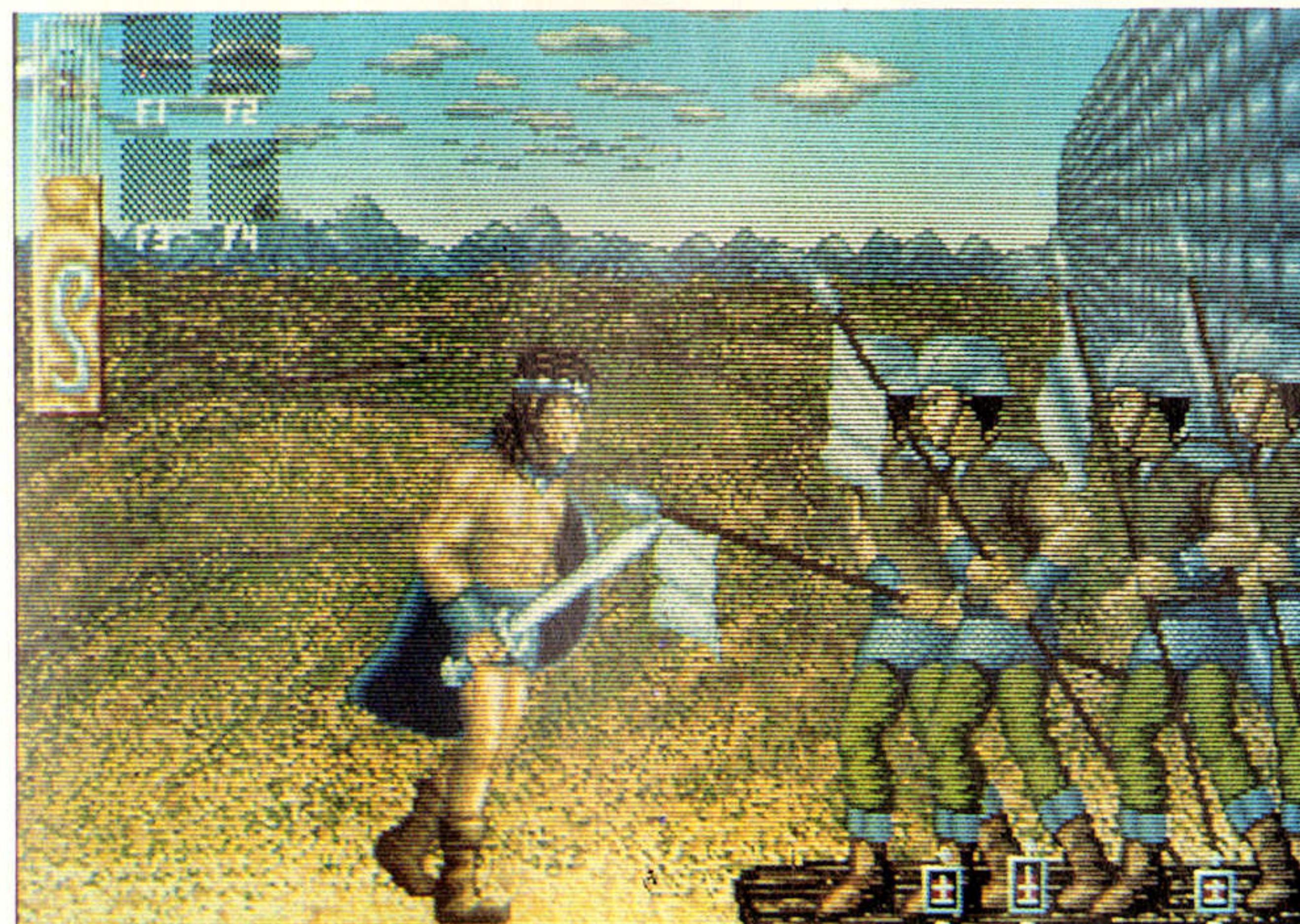
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Circle Reader Service Number 32.

Sword Out Your Problems



Some of the meanies from *Sword of Sodan*.

By Daniel Carr

SWORD OF SODAN is one of those drop-your-jaw knock-out arcade-style games with first-rate graphics and sound. There are eleven levels or screens with each one having something different to fight or get past.

For the plot, it appears this necromancer, Zoras, has killed your father the King, and is off terrorizing the countryside along with submerging the Kingdom into darkness. So, to correct this problem, you resort to the old standby: revenge.

Zoras, however, is holed up in castle Cragmoore and getting in there to him won't be easy. Guards in the city and monsters in the forest and graveyard must be dispatched first.

Once in the castle, all sorts of nasties are lurking about in every hallway and passage just waiting to turn you into hero-chow.

The game is started by choosing either a muscular hero or overly endowed heroine. Control is by joystick with up for jumping, down for kneeling and right for forward. Pushing up and left will make your hero perform a broad jump. To swing the sword, the fire button and stick are pushed simultaneously with up for hacking overhead, left to swing forward and down to hit low. All of these maneuvers must be mastered to get to Zoras.

Your sword and magic items are all the tools you have to defeat Zoras. When you meet an

55 ►

A New Command System for Wargames



Battles in Normandy.

By Jim Fink

In the past two years, a quiet revolution has been realized in the development of computer strategy games. Strategic Studies Group has introduced, developed, and brought to maturity the first true wargame system available for commercial use. The objective of this system is to depict 20th Century corps level combat (i.e. 60 or less battalions per side) within a 25 day period over an area of about 1000 square kilometers. They have succeeded brilliantly!

Each of 28 scenarios encompassed in the four titles in this system present a variety of corps level actions (most from World War II but also from World War I, Korea, Vietnam, and even the Mexican War of 1848) that have one and only one underlying set of rules and user interface. This means that as a player, you have to learn only one set of rules and menus to be able to play any of the scenarios in the system.

THE RULES

The rules themselves are simple, clever, and absorbing. They represent a limited set of the principal activities a corps commander can take, and provide a distinct separation in control from your corps command, and that of your subordinate regimental and battalion commands. The approach is decidedly different from a typical board game where the player has control over each and every unit on the board. When using the *Battlefront System*, you act as corps commander. The only units over whom you have direct control are the various divisional headquarters units under your command.

regiments, and these orders are passed on to their respective battalions who actually move or fight. Combat units have several attributes which effect their performance: experience, fatigue, supply, and combat state:

1. Experience

Combat units have four levels of experience (Elite, Veteran, Trained and Green) these levels are a constant throughout the game.

2. Fatigue

A combat unit may be Fresh, Fit, Tired or Exhausted. As a unit is committed to combat more and more frequently, its fatigue will increase. Moreover, a unit committed to any action at night will suffer increased levels of fatigue. On the other hand, allowing a unit to sleep at night by giving it no orders, or pulling it out of combat, will result in a decrease in fatigue.

3. Supply

Regiments have four supply states - Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. These states will be one of the determinants of success or failure in their attacks and defense. As units are used in combat, their supply state declines, and they must be replenished by their division. Divisions have the same four supply states, but division supply represents the ability of division to resupply its subordinate regiments.

4. Combat State

Each regiment may be in one of 3 possible combat states: Engaged, Contact, or Ready:
a. Engaged - when in this state, a regiment is fully committed to combat. You can order it to attack or defend, but not to maneuver.

b. Contact - when in this state, a regiment is close to the enemy, and can order limited attacks and defense, but again, cannot freely maneuver.

c. Ready - This is the only state that allows you to maneuver a regiment. It is out of

contact with the enemy and may be ordered toward an objective. As it carries out those orders, if it closes with the enemy, it will change its condition to Engaged or Contact, depending upon how close it comes to the enemy.

d. Reserve - Once a unit is committed to combat, i.e. it is in Contact or Engaged with the enemy, the only way you can regain maneuver control over the unit is if you order it into reserve. This will move the unit toward its divisional headquarters, but beware, if attacked while under reserve orders, casualties can be catastrophic!

These four elements - experience, fatigue, supply, and combat state, are the principal determinant of combat results, and you can always examine your own troops to evaluate their status. Your ability to analyze the strength of enemy units is limited to his position, and type (e.g. armor or infantry) but you cannot determine his strength, supply state, training or fatigue.

The interaction of these rules produces a great deal of realism. Whereas most boardgames are deterministic in structure, (i.e. for each possible move or combat there exists a known set of outcomes that are mathematically predictable and some of which are optimum) in the Battlefront system you do not have enough information to determine what the optimum move is. Consequently, you will not spend your time counting up factors trying to get that 3 to 1 attack. Instead you will be trying to keep your supply lines open, seeing that units get sufficient rest, that depleted units are rotated out of the line, and above all maintaining an adequate reserve. These duties are, of course, the most important ones of a corps commander.

32 ►

Giving orders to a unit is managed using a simple set of menus. The orders from which you can select are limited to the legitimate ones for that unit considering its combat state.

THE SCENARIOS

The following are the scenarios that are supplied in each of the 4 games that make up the Battlefront system:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Battlefront | Battles in Normandy |
| Crete | Onaha |
| Stalingrad | Utah |
| Saipan | Sword |
| Bastogne | Cherbourg |

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Rommel | Villers-Bocage |
| Syria | Goodwood |
| Sidi Rezegh | Epsom |
| Malta | Halls of Montezuma |
| The Cauldron | Mexico City |
| Alem el Halfa | Belleau Wood |
| Kasserine | Iwo Jima |
| Maknassy | Okinawa I |
| Tebourga Gap | Pusan |
| | Inchon |
| | Okinawa II |
| | Hue |

You can play either side in each of the scenarios.

MODIFYING THE SCENARIOS

In each of the 28 scenarios provided in the games of the Battlefront system, you can modify any of the underlying assumptions of the scenario using the Strategic Studies Group's Warplan. Warplan allows you to change the strength, the supply state, the fatigue state, the weapons, and/or the training state of a battalion or battalions prior to the beginning of a game. It also permits you to add or delete battalions from

regiments, and change their time and/or place of arrival. Finally, you may modify the map on which the game is played, adding, changing or deleting terrain. In short, with this tool it is simple to modify any scenario to make it more balanced, or "historical".

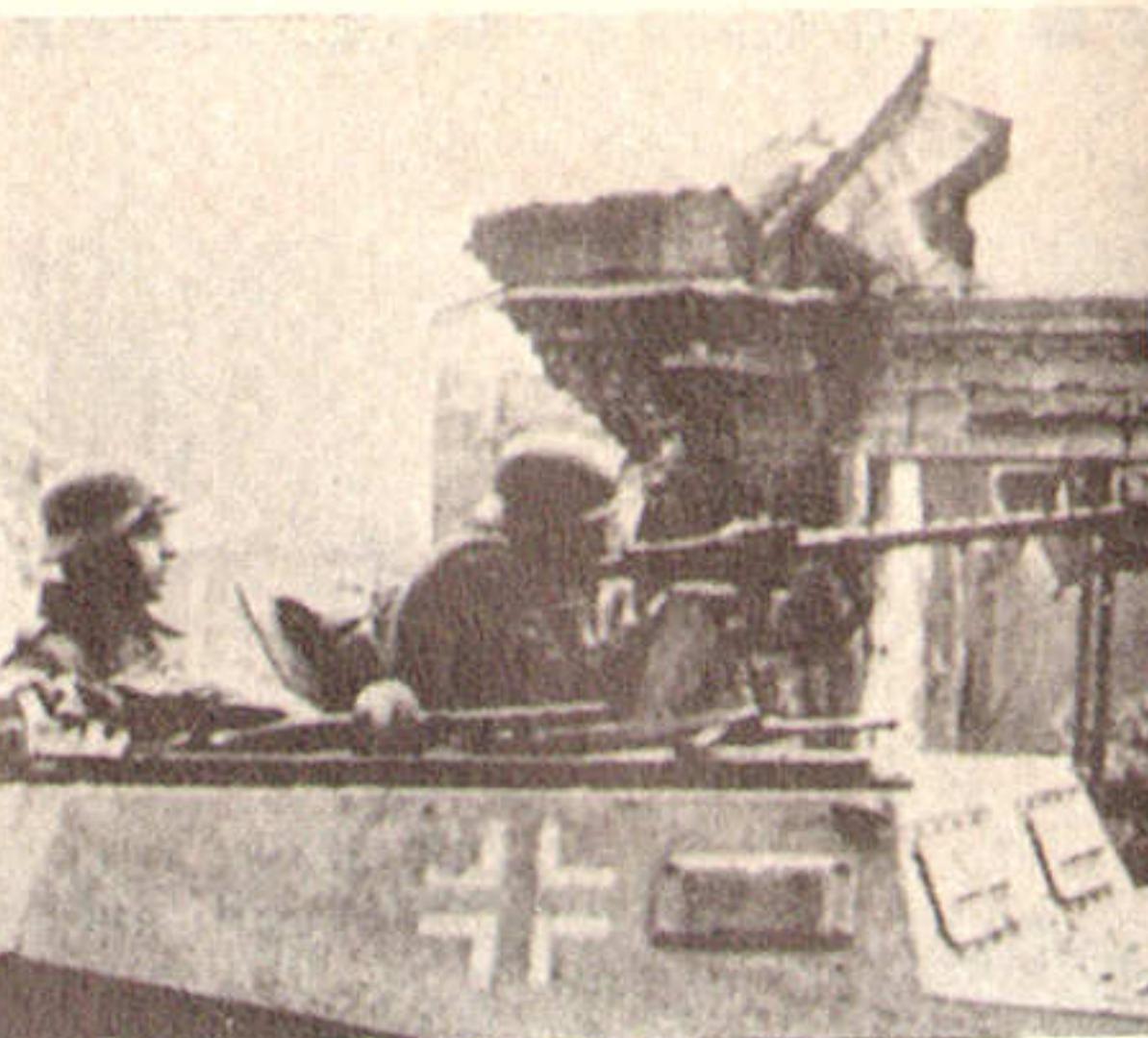
In fact, you can create entirely new scenarios using the tools in Warplan. Doing so is a lot of work, but is precisely with these tools that the SSG prepares a new title for this series!

Similarly, you have the ability to modify the icons that represent units and terrain on the screen with a utility called Warpaint. If you are creative, you can change the look as well as the feel of the game on the screen.

It should be added that both Warplan and Warpaint are also furnished with Strategic Studies Group's other game system Decisive Battles of the Civil War. Once you have learned how to use these utilities, the knowledge is transferable to other products.

COMPATIBILITY

The four titles that so far comprise the Battlefront series were released over a two and one half year period. During that time, changes were made in the system, some of which had a decided effect on the look, feel, and/or play of the games. The extraordinary programming and systems ability of the SSG team is demonstrated in the upgrades, as they are each upwardly and downwardly compatible. By this, I mean, you can play any of the early scenarios with any of the later releases of the program, and the new changes will be incorporated, or conversely, you can play any of the late scenarios with the early programs and changes will be left out. This is not easy to do, but clearly enhances the value of the system.



Battlefront.

SUMMARY

The Battlefront System is one of the most innovative strategic game systems ever developed, but you may find that like olives, you have to acquire the taste. If you are interested in military gaming, it is certainly worth owning one or more of these titles to see how you like the game. You should be prepared, however, for a substantially different experience than most computer or board games. With Battlefront, you manage battles as opposed to fighting them. It is your subordinates who actually do the fighting, and their success or failure depends on the skill with which you manage the resources that they need to win. You may find yourself very frustrated at the lack of direct control over events on your computer screen.

I would suggest that if you are going to buy one of these games to give the system a trial, you would do well to purchase either Rommel or Halls of Montezuma, as these contain the latest versions of the program, including the much more handsome Warpaint terrain and unit icons. Then, if you like what you see and want to get earlier titles, you will be able to upgrade them.



Battles in Normandy.

Name: **BATTLEFRONT SYSTEM**
-Battlefront
-Battles in Normandy
-Halls of Montezuma
-Rommel

Type: Strategy/Simulation
Formats: Commodore 64/128
Publisher: Strategic Studies Group (SSG)

Designer: Roger Keating, Ian Trout, et al
Ages: 10 & up
Players: One or Two
Price: \$40.00

Ability Level:
Packaging:
Documentation:
Graphics:
Realism:
Playability:

Intermediate
Good (7)
Good (7)
Average (5)
Excellent (9.8)
Excellent (9.8)

CP RATINGS:

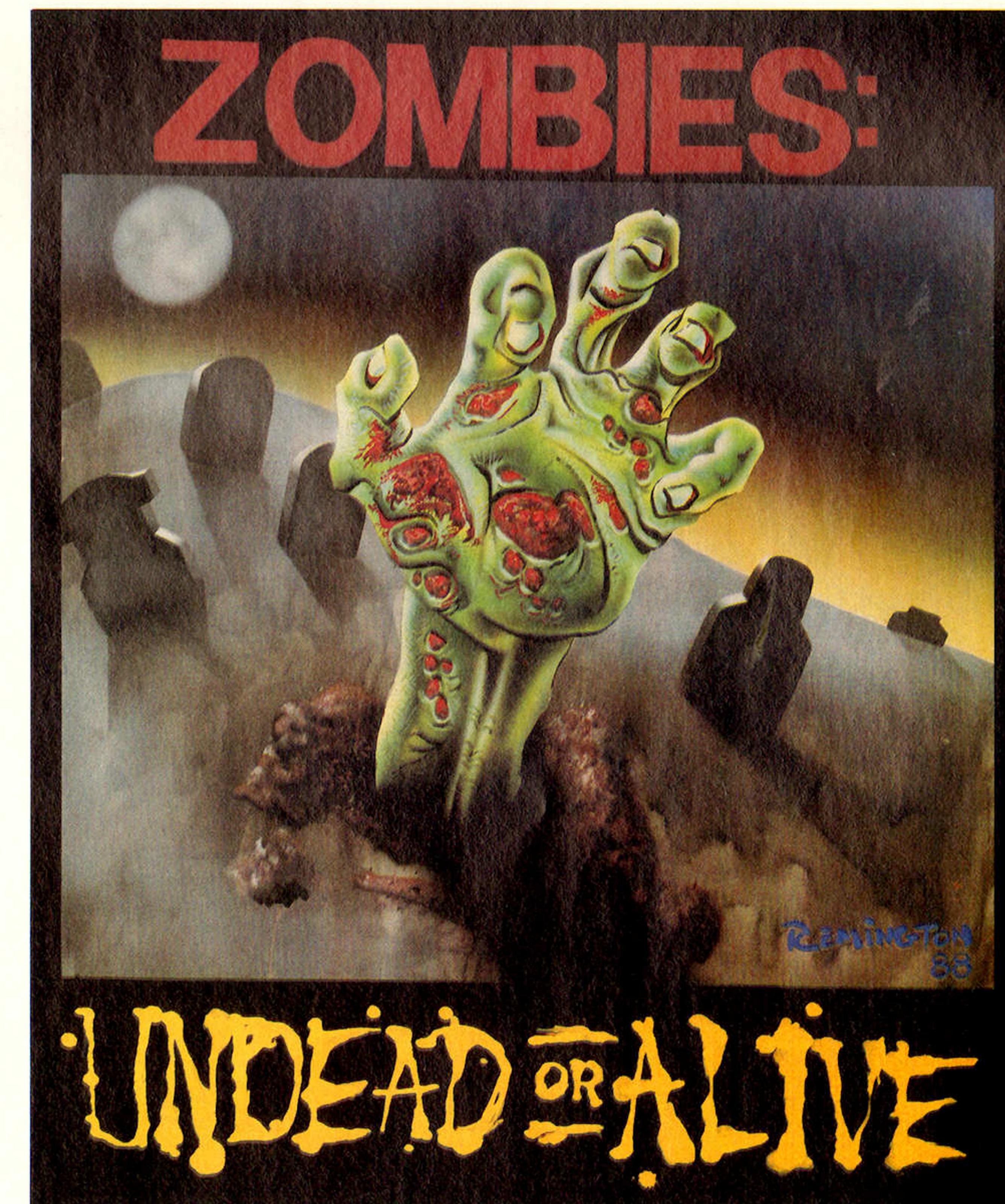
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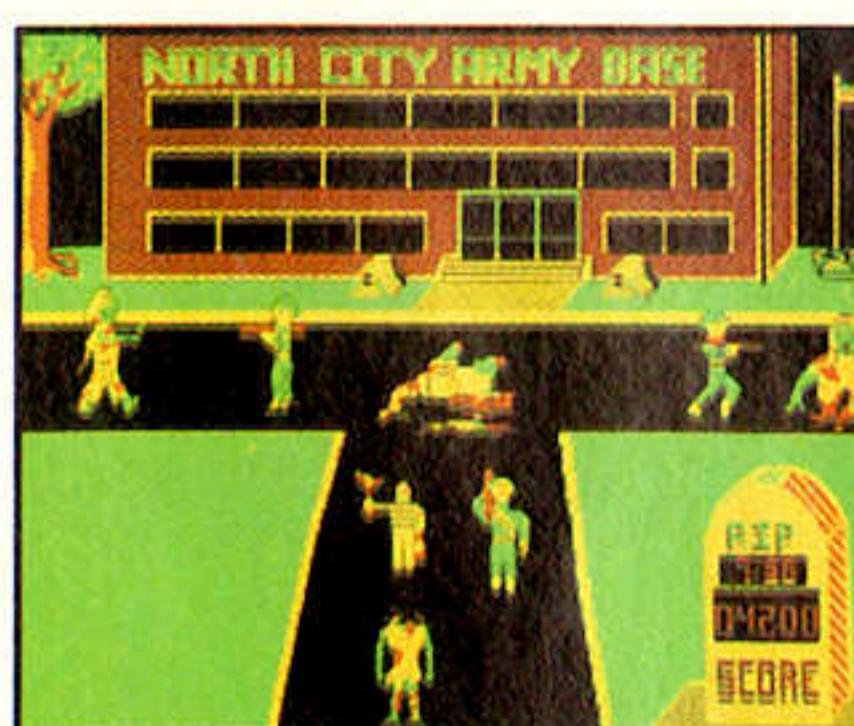


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Circle Reader Service Number 49.

The Impossible Dream

By Rawson L. Stovall

It's that time again -- time to save the world from impending doom. The evil scientist Elvin Atombender has returned from his demise several years ago in Epyx's **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION** to once again implement his dastardly deeds. This time he's the villain in **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2**, Epyx's latest game for the Commodore 64. It is also available for the Atari ST, and the IBM PC. Versions for the Apple II, Apple IIGS, and Amiga will be out later this year.

This sequel to **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION** marks the evil scientist's return. During the past few years he has grown in power and has resurfaced with a plot to dominate the world that would make even the coolest of governments bite their nails in horror.

As Field Agent 29, the player must complete the "Impossible" mission of foiling Atombender's devious plan. In order to succeed and prevent the destruction of the world, the player must break into Atombender's massive eight tower Los Angeles complex which is guarded by an immense security network consisting of many different types of mobile robots, locking passageways and secret codes and musical sequences. The evil scientist's vast computer network then must be neutralized so that it won't go through with its instructions to launch humanity-killing missiles with the touch of a finger. All of this must be done in a relatively short amount of time.



Before reaching the computer network, the player must search through many different rooms in the eight towers, somersaulting over time bombs, suicide robots, and land mines in order to find secret security code numbers. A correct three-digit code will allow the player to enter the other towers and eventually Atombender's control room. Furthermore, the player must always keep his eye out along the way for safes that hold six coded pieces of music, and for weapons that will aid the player in his quest to save the world.

The game play is very addicting -- and very hard. Every time my game is over, I return to the beginning to try again. Something in my subconscious tells me that no matter how difficult the game may be, I have a chance. I try countless times over to save our planet, but I just can't do it.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2 truly lives up to its name. The graphics and sounds are excellent and the game play is fast and compelling. The

only trouble is that to complete the mission in the given amount of time the player is simply asked to do the impossible. Moreover, the instruction booklet doesn't explain some things and sometimes skips over entire parts of the game.

I don't see how anyone can complete the mission. One time I spent nearly my entire time limit trying to finish one room! The game at times is so frustrating I felt like screaming. Yet instead, the addictive nature of the game prevailed and I opted to try it again. And again. And again. And again. Good thing the fate of the world isn't in my hands.

Name: **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2**
Type: Action
Format: C-64, IBM, Atari ST, Apple II series, Amiga
Publisher: Epyx
Designers: Novotrade Software Studios
Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: none
* **Players:** One
Price: Atari ST, Amiga: \$49.95
all others: \$39.95

Ability Level: Advanced Good (7)
Packaging: Average (5)
Documentation: Very Good (9)
Graphics: Good (8)
Playability: 7.70
CP RATING: Circle Reader Service Number 37.

Don't Blow It Out

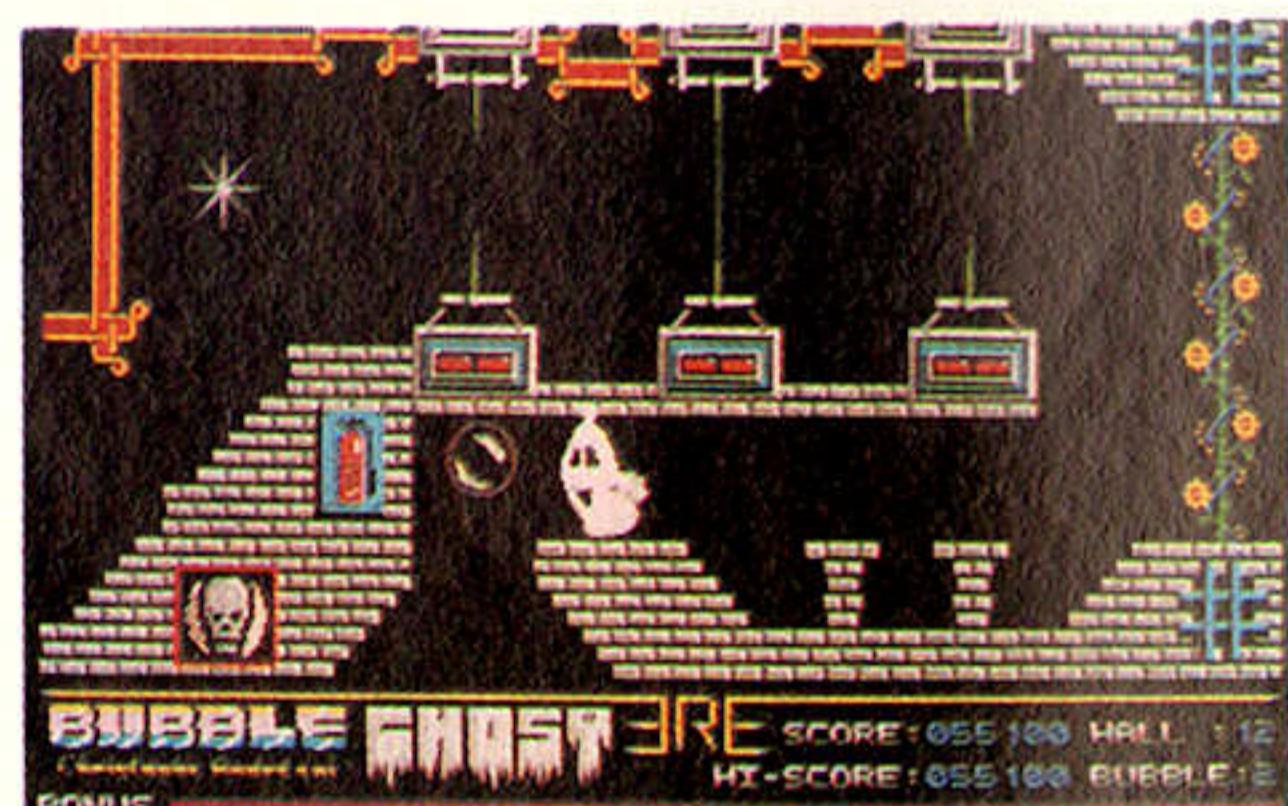
By Rawson L. Stovall

Move over Casper--another new friendly ghost is about to take over your place and his name is **BUBBLE GHOST**. No, you won't find him on any cartoons or in any comic books, but you will find him as the star of an intriguing little computer game named after him --**BUBBLE GHOST** by Accolade.

In **BUBBLE GHOST** the player takes on the role of the caring, fiesty, little ghost who's sole purpose in life (well, the afterlife) is to safely blow a tiny delicate bubble through a 35-room, hazard-filled castle.

Each of the 35 rooms contains obstacles such as electric fans, candles, knives, scissors, as well as several different "technotrap" (clever little inventions) that can pop the bubble. The bubble pops any time it comes into contact with these various dangers.

Nearly every room in the castle is a puzzle that the player must solve in order to proceed through the castle safely. The game also has many different secrets that are not explained in the instruction booklet. For example, somewhere in the castle there is a candle. Whenever the bubble ghost tries to blow the bubble over it, it pops! However, if the ghost



were to blow towards the flame of the candle, then maybe the fire will go out. It's that simple, it's just common sense...

I don't like to use the word "unique" because it seems too overused. But **BUBBLE GHOST** is unique. There's no other way to explain it. The idea of maneuvering a little ghost around a castle blowing a bubble is truly unique. As far as originality goes, **BUBBLE GHOST** is tops. Nevertheless, the game play is fairly shallow (I mean, all you do is blow around a bubble). All of the pictures and graphics in the castle are STRANGE. It makes me think what life might be like in an Andy Warhol painting. Strange...

In a world where gruesome "blood and guts" movies such as *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM*

STREET, FRIDAY THE 13th, HALLOWEEN and THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE become immensely popular, it's comforting to know that somewhere is a castle far, far away (even if it is in a computer game) lives a spunky little ghost. And this ghost spends his precious time caring for a helpless bubble trapped in a castle filled with dangers.

Name: **BUBBLE GHOST**
Type: Action
Format: Apple IIGS, Amiga, Atari ST, C-64
Publisher: Accolade
Designer: Inforgrames
Ages: 5 & up
Requirements: MS-DOS: 256K; other: optional
* **Players:** One
Price: C-64: \$29.95; all others \$34.95

Ability Level: Intermediate Good (7)
Packaging: Average (6)
Documentation: Excellent (9.5)
Graphics: Average (6.5)
Playability: 7.13
CP RATING: Circle Reader Service Number 38.

Space Marines Hit the Breach

By Daniel Carr

"We Want You for the Federated Worlds Special Forces" says the box cover to **BREACH**. If you have read Robert Heinlein's Starship Troopers then you'll have a good handle on what this game is about. **BREACH** is a tactical-level game in which you can lead squads of up to 20 marines equipped with 20 different types of weapons into battle, destroy everything in sight and achieve some objective specified by one of the many scenarios that comes with the game. Some scenarios require you to rescue prisoners, capture data packs along with killing a certain percentage of opponents.

The game is a nice combination of role-playing and conventional wargame. On the wargame side, each of your men is individually moved around on a large "board" (though only a small portion can be seen on the screen at any time) by pointing and clicking on a square you want him to move. Only horizontal and vertical movement is allowed. (This is true for combat too.) Each man has a set number of movement points which are used to move across terrain and perform tasks such as firing a blaster. With role-playing, each man has different stats relating how well he can shoot, carry, operate a detection and crack unit and showing his current health.

Key to the game are your men. There are five types of marines consisting of marauders, scouts, infiltrators, psionic talents and finally the squad leader. Marauders will make up the bulk of your

enemy types used in the scenarios are here and you can come up with some very wild and weird scenarios to put your troopers through. Plus you can alter the scenarios that come with the game. Note that while this might spoil the "surprise" element of exploring, you can put together some pretty tough missions where combat is the goal.

There is only a few things to complain about. One is that starting a scenario requires a bit of work. A window must be opened to choose a mission, then another must be opened to get a squad leader and finally the game must be named and saved before you can start play. Also, if your SL dies, you must exit the program and generate a new one through the scenario builder. This requires heavy use of the mouse and would work better if the SL's name were set as a user specified default, (with the program generating a new one if he dies). Then all you have to do is hit a key to bring up the scenario menu, point-click twice for the mission and the current SL you're using would be incorporated automatically.

Another problem is that all the marine types are exactly the same. The SL, marauders, etc., are all the same size, shape and color. With such a graphically sharp game, this is disappointing since with many marines (up to twenty) on the map, it gets to be a pain when you forget who's what and must cycle through each soldier to find the one you want. The game would be easier to play if more detail went into the figures, such as a different color for each type of marine.

As for bad guys, there are a lot of them. You have enemy marines and aliens equipped like your own men, beasts that bite, battle robots that are very tough to destroy, autoguns that are like battle robots but can't move and finally overlords with vibroswords and psionics.

The game also includes a very extensive scenario builder. All of the terrain, weapons and



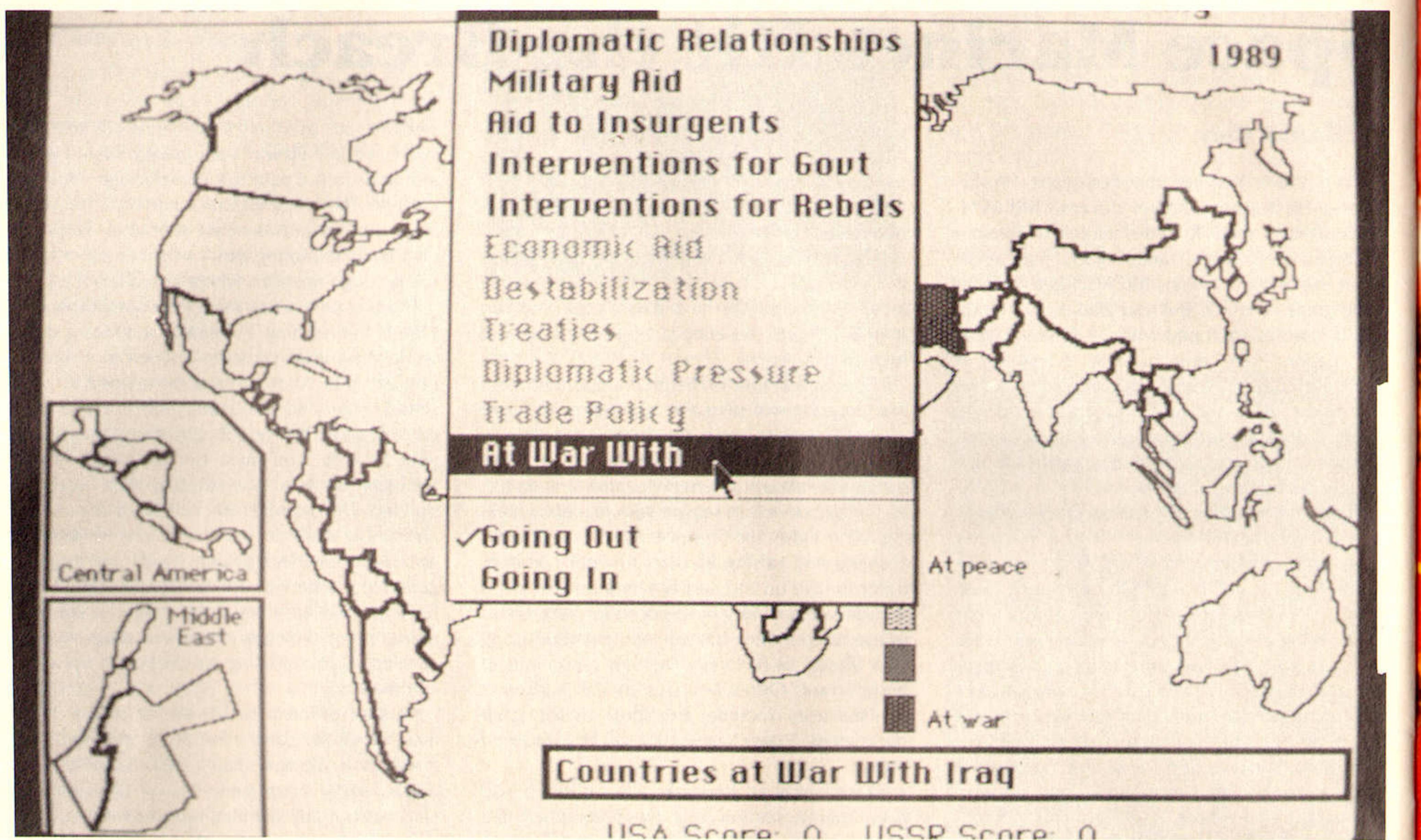
Targeting the enemy in Breach.

To conclude, however, **BREACH** is an excellent game. There's lots of action. The graphics are clear and detailed, showing off terrain, rockets and laser beams nicely. The sound effects are good, with loud explosions and enemy screaming when they are blown up. Some nice touches include a door, when opened, makes the same swooshing sound as a door on the old Star Trek series.

Name: **BREACH**
Type: Adventure
Formats: Amiga, Atari ST
Publisher: Omnitrend Software
Designers: William G.M. Leslie III and Thomas R. Carbone
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: 512K
* **Players:** One
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate Very Good (9)
Packaging: Very Good (9)
Documentation: Very Good (9)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (9)
Playability: Good (7)
CP RATINGS: 8.00
Circle Reader Service Number 20.

Don't Touch that Button



By Rawson L. Stovall

My afternoon wasn't going so hot. Rome was burning. Well, actually they were just experiencing a coup d'état -- the overthrowing of a government using political factors rather than military ones. But despite my concern over the "changing of the guard in Greece", all of my attention was focused on the intense situation in Pakistan.

Life was going just fine. Oh, sure I was having my usual problems with the many different African nations--but, hey, who doesn't? Then it happened. The Soviet Union wasn't content in just taking over Afghanistan. They **had** to go and meddle with Pakistan. They **had** to fund the rebels and incite riots. They **had** to provoke assassinations and send 100,000 troops to support the insurgency. When President Reagan said, "Make my day", I doubt he meant a day like that.

BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION is available for the Macintosh, MS-DOS (IBM), and Commodore Amiga. Players assume the role of either the United States President or the General Secretary of the Soviet Union. The objective is to complete eight years in office (1989-1997) without initiating a nuclear war while also dealing with global politics and foreign relations.

To win "prestige points" the player can use diplomatic tools, including military aid, economic aid, and treaties in order to influence both friendly and unfriendly countries. The

game includes a gigantic statistical database that provides the player with vast information on every single country included as well as artificial intelligence to make the game seem more realistic.

In 1985 a personal computer game named **BALANCE OF POWER** was released. David Aaron, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs called the game, "The most sophisticated strategic simulation in America other than Pentagon war games". Much has happened since 1985, so Chris Crawford, designer of **BALANCE OF POWER** wrote a new edition of the game.

BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION is that new edition. It features a multi-polar level where minor countries also pursue active foreign relations policies, making the game more realistic. It also includes 80 countries (the old game only had 62) as well as an updated database and faster processing capabilities.

BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION is the best, most complex strategy game ever! I once thought that the original game was, but obviously the latest version has much more to offer--though both games deserve awards.

Defcon 3. The precious balance of power has just tilted. Pakistan is a close US ally--we can't just sit back and watch it being brutally taken over. Therefore, 100,000 US troops enter the Pakistani crisis. Terrorism in Pakistan is rampant. India supports the Soviets. The Soviets give a

billion dollars to the insurgency. The country's stability is weakening very fast - Defcon 2. US and Soviet troops clash--Defcon 1.

The game stops and the screen goes blank. Suddenly, this message appears: You have ignited an accidental nuclear war. And no, there is no animated display of a mushroom cloud with parts of bodies flying through the air...We do not reward failure.

Name: **BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION**
Type: Simulation
Format: Macintosh, IBM, Amiga
Publisher: Mindscape, Inc.
Designers: Chris Crawford
Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: Mac: 512K, 800K drive monochrome only
* Players: 1 to 2
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level:
Packaging:
Documentation:
Graphics:
Realism:
Playability:

Advanced
Good (7)
Very Good (9)
Very Good (8.5)
Excellent (9.8)
Excellent (9.8)

CP RATING:

9.24

Circle Reader Service Number 35.

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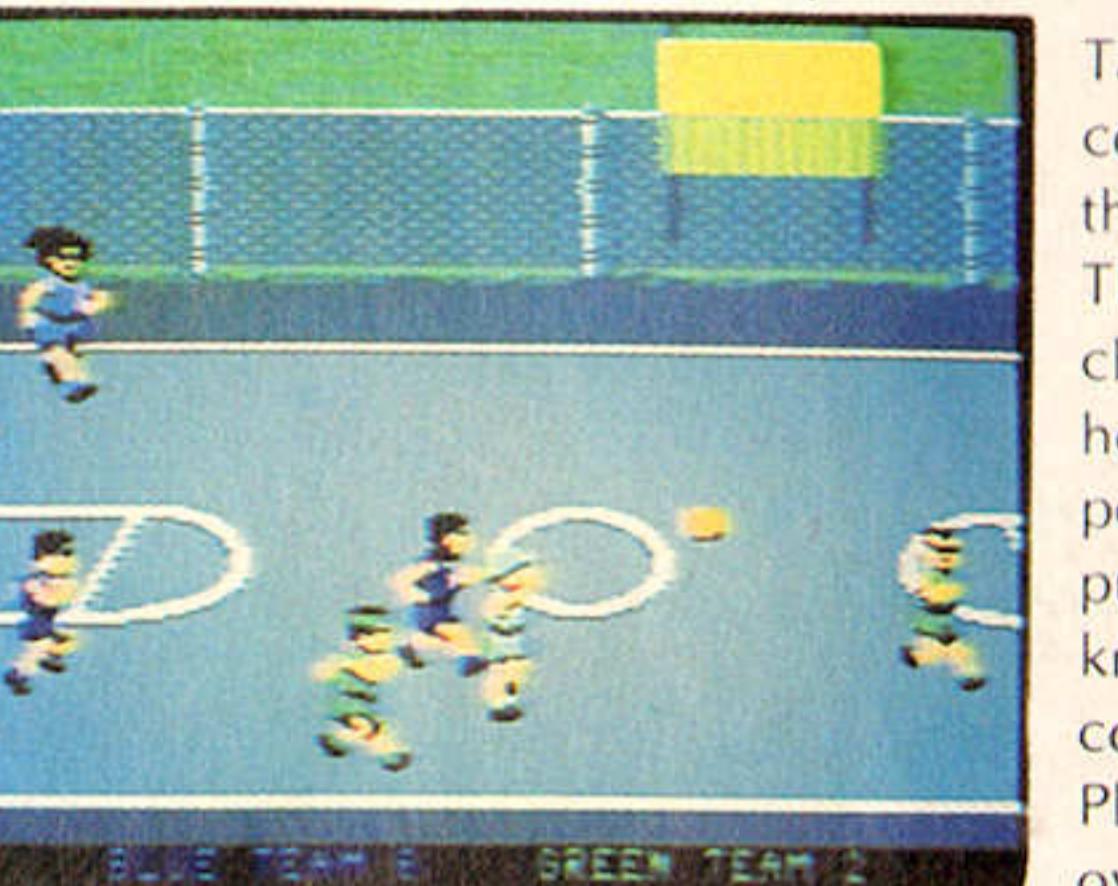
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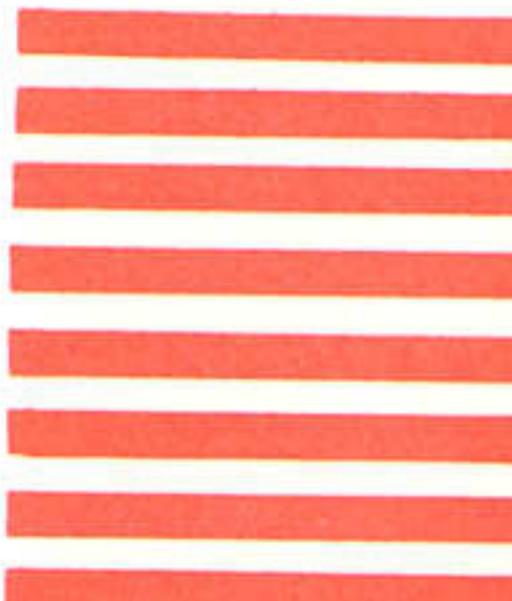
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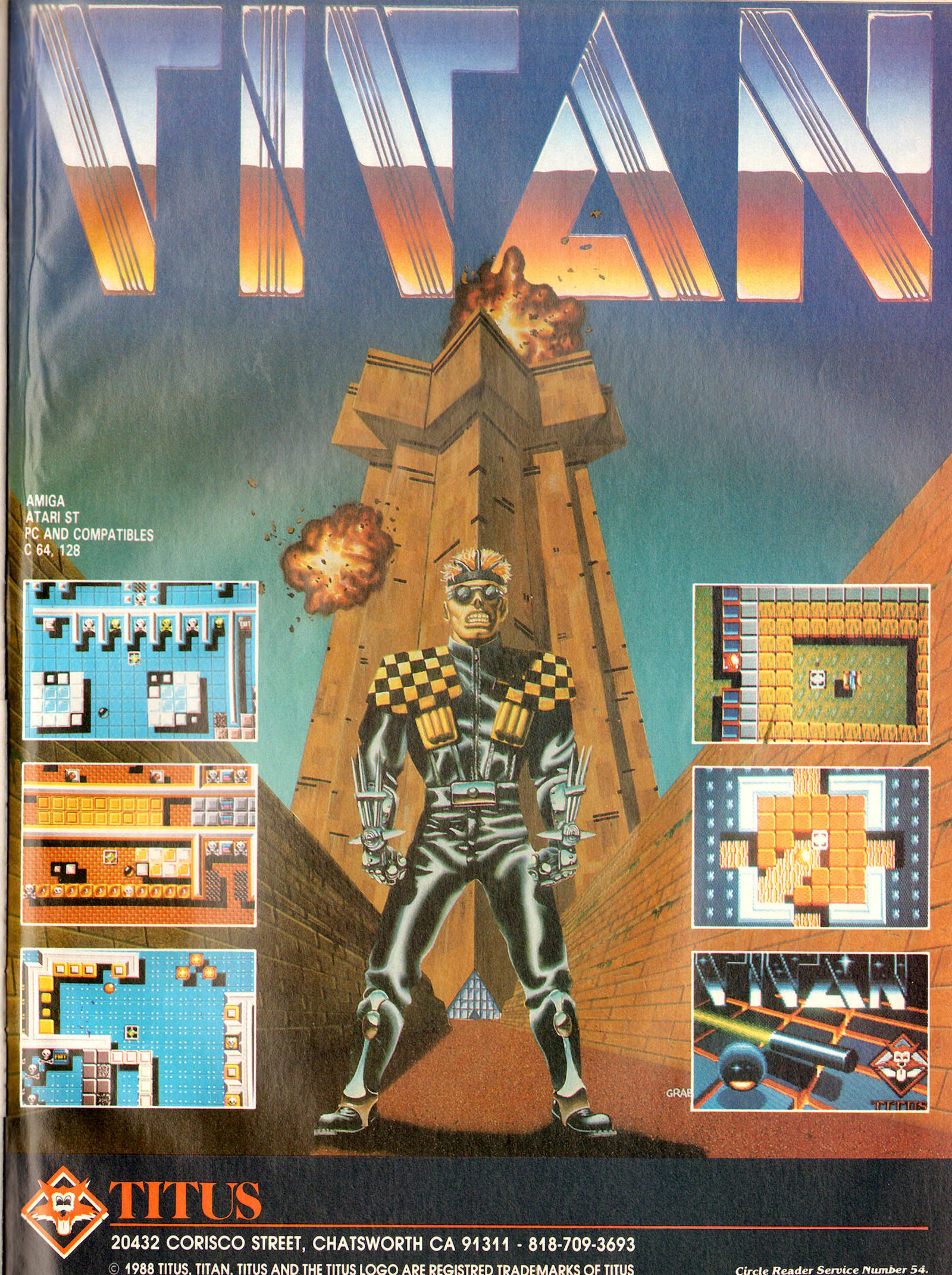
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Circle Reader Service Number 54.

Lunarium Mining Zombies Threaten Earth

By Rusel DeMaria

These are desperate times. The Nazi war machine has stumbled onto the secret of lunarium and is mining the stuff on the moon. Lunarium bombs lower the IQ of males by 30 points (they don't seem to affect females). The famed professor Barnstorff and his beautiful daughter, Jane, have been kidnapped. They will be brainwashed into Nazi zombie slaves--helping the enemy make bombs. The plan: drop a few bombs on Washington, and the swastika will hang from the White House in a few minutes less than no time at all.

Only you, **Rocket Ranger**, can save the professor (and his daughter). Only you can save the world. Are you up to the task?

Once again, Cinemaware has given us a first-rate movie-on-a-disk. This time, the theme is the old 40's serials. You may or may not remember them--the ones with the guy flying through the air with his rocket pack on his back, his wrist monitor, and his radium pistol. Maybe you don't remember it, but it doesn't matter. The game is fun even if you never saw the originals, but it's

all the more entertaining if it takes you down nostalgia lane.

This is much more than a passive movie, however. This is a game that includes a lot of strategy, arcade-like action, and a good deal of luck. Don't expect to save the world the first time you play. It takes time to learn the ropes, and you'll fail more than once along the way.

The idea is to use your spies (five of them at the beginning of the game) to find the Nazi rocket factories and steal enough rocket parts to make your own ship. You also have to find the lunarium processing plants and steal the stuff to power both your own moon rocket and the rocket pack.

This is a game of timing, and you must check your War Room map for reports from spies scattered in various countries around the globe.

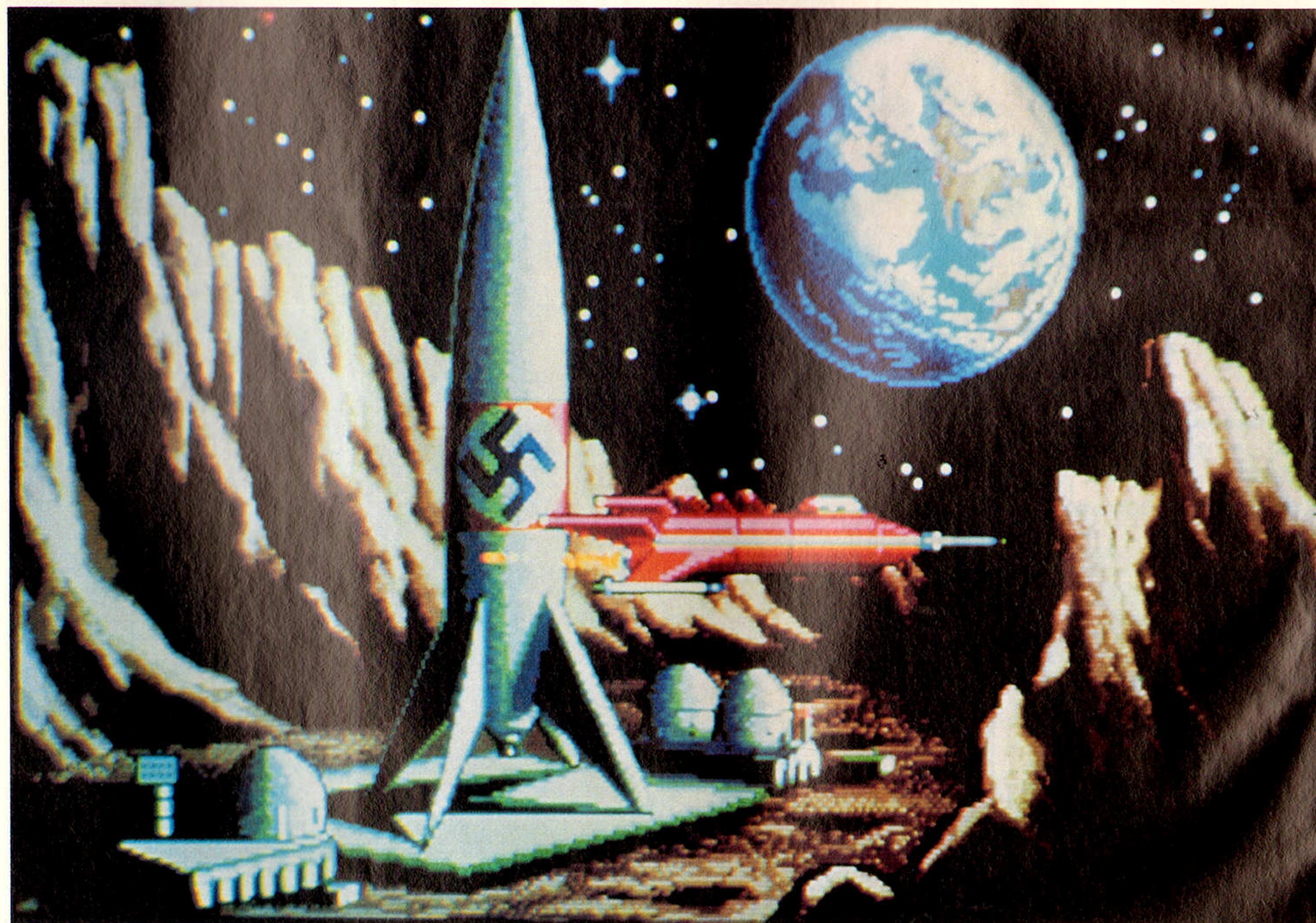
Then, you must fly to different parts of the world attacking the various Nazi installations. You must load the exact amount of lunarium to get to each location -- the information is found on the Rocket Ranger Code Wheel (which serves as the only copy protection for the game). If you load the improper amount of lunarium, you either

die, or you end up in deep trouble).

You have to keep moving your spies around to find the rocket parts and the other bases. Raid various key Nazi installations to slow down the march of their military machine. Organize resistance movements (via your spies) to further hamper the Nazis. But, most of all, find those rocket parts and get the lunarium!

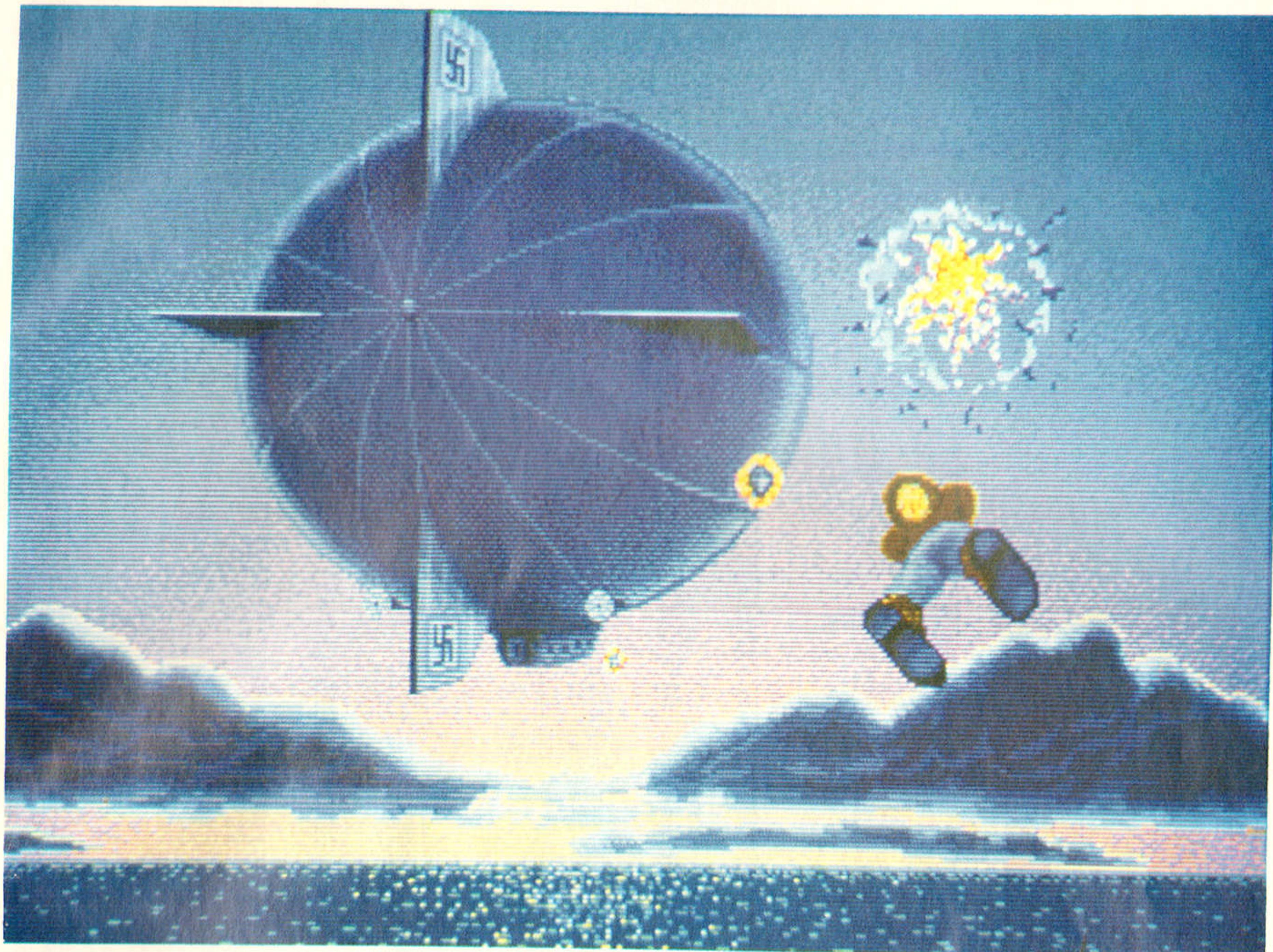
There are basically seven action sequences --taking off from your base at Ft. Dix; attacking a zeppelin in mid-flight, fighting Nazi planes, blasting ack ack batteries at night, shooting your way into a jungle temple (which houses a lunarium plant), fist fighting a Nazi guard to obtain a rocket part, and, finally, fighting the Nazi zombie women on the moon to foil the Nazi plans.

Each action sequence requires different skills, and it may take some time to develop an understanding of how they work. The most entertaining is probably the first fight. The graphics in this scene are excellent, and the realism is sufficient to make it a fine boxing simulation in its own right. You can throw body punches, jabs, uppercuts, and devastating



Nazi moon base in Rocket Ranger.

Computer Play



Rocket Ranger attacking Zeppelin.

hook. You can also block high or low. Your adversary has a similar arsenal, and, though beating the first guard (for the first rocket part) is easy, later guards seem to learn from the mistakes of their colleague, so look out!

I found the planes hardest to shoot down. Sometimes I did it with ease; other times, I failed. Attacking the zeppelin is also hard --remember, they used highly flammable hydrogen in those days! An errant shot, and it's bye bye zep.

Rocket Ranger is lots of fun, though it does take some patience and persistence. If at first you don't succeed... Also, on faster PCs, you may want to use the slow down key (the minus key), since the game zips along entirely too fast on machines above 15 megahertz. I used a public domain utility called AT-Slow before running Rocket Ranger to slow my Compaq Deskpro 386S down to manageable speeds. Even displaying the excellent EGA graphics, the program was too fast without some slowing. Another caveat: You may experience some irregularities playing with a joystick on machines above 15 megahertz. It's not definite, but it can happen.

One of the side effects of this game is that you learn a lot of geography as you place spies and fly around the globe. I'm sure this wasn't design-

ed to be an educational game, exactly, but it's a nice feature.

The graphics in this game are, like other Cinemaware titles, very good. At EGA resolution, the colors are vibrant, the images clear and precise, and the action is smooth. Other than occasional problems with the joystick (mentioned above), I found this game played very well, and the controls were sensible and easy to learn.

Although the PC speaker is not noted for its musical abilities, some entertaining tunes accompany parts of the game.

You can pause Rocket Ranger if you get called away, but you can't save the game at any point. Therefore, you need to complete any game in progress. One aspect of the game is luck. If you are lucky, you'll find a lunarium factory early in the game. If you are unlucky, you may find yourself still searching for rocket parts as the Nazis move in on Washington. Still, unlike the real world, you can always start another game after witnessing the fall of the free world. And you'll probably want to try again...and again.

I found this game to be both exciting and frustrating. It's not easy. As fast as you work, the enemy is working, too. You can slow them down somewhat, but you have to manage your

resources -- spies, lunarium stash, time -- skillfully to succeed. I guess the fun of this game is that there is a learning curve. Practice does make, if not perfect, then at least better.

I think Rocket Ranger will appeal to a wide range of game players. It's got action, strategy, and challenge all mixed into an imaginative and graphically satisfying package.

Name: **ROCKET RANGER**

Type: Strategy/Action

Formats: IBM, Amiga

Publisher: Cinemaware

Ages: 10 to Adult

Requirements: CGA, EGA, VGA;

384K required

Players: One

Price: IBM PC (reviewed here) and

Amiga versions \$49.95;

Commodore 64/128 version \$34.95

Ability Level:

Intermediate

Packaging:

Excellent (9.2)

Documentation:

Very Good (9)

Graphics/Text:

Excellent (9.5)

Playability:

Very Good (9)

CP RATINGS:

Circle Reader Service Number 39.

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Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law, Vol. 30, No. 4, December 2005
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If you don't see it...ASK!!!

TWO WAYS TO WIN IN THE RING...

Role Playing in a Planetary System



One of the fighting screens for Phantasy Stars.

By Rusel DeMaria

Many people may see *Phantasy Star* as Sega's answer to Nintendo's *Legend of Zelda*. It is more or less inevitable that comparisons will be made, so I'll start off by saying that, although they are both role playing games, they are very different kinds of games.

Phantasy Star is a very traditional role-playing game, similar to the Dungeons and Dragons motif, or the Wizardry games on home computers. The skills necessary to succeed at this game include puzzle solving, mapping (lots of mapping), and persistence. Though this game might be fun to play without using those skills, it is unlikely that anyone could really get very far in the game without careful attention to detail.

Phantasy Star takes place in a planetary system some time in the future. The main character is Alis, and she has accepted a quest to avenge her brother's death and rid the solar system of the evil sorcerer, Lassic. To do so, she

will need the help of three allies---Odin, a powerful warrior; Noah, a sorceror; and Myau, an unearthly feline. However, Alis begins the game alone, and she must find her friends as well as a long list of other objects. In fact, once you have deciphered the clues and read the manual (whichever comes first), you will have quite a shopping list of objects--weapons, armor, magical items, and miscellaneous stuff--to find. The manual kindly offers a complete list of objects that exist in the game.

As usual in these games, most of the characters/monsters that you meet are unfriendly, and it is by dispatching them that you gain experience and money. Also, as usual, you begin with only a few hit points, so you can be killed easily. However, recharging your characters is usually not a problem--most cities, towns, and villages have a place where you can rest up and get strong again. Also, the cities and towns are populated with people who usually offer clues, and sometimes interact in other ways. And,

although most are unfriendly, and all will fight, some of the monsters and people you meet outside the towns are actually intelligent and will provide further clues, if you know how to communicate with them.

There's magic in this game; in fact, magic plays a large role in helping you to complete the game. Alis and her crew can cast different spells. Myau and Noah are the most potent spell casters while Alis can acquire knowledge of a few useful spells. Odin, alas, is strong and willing but never learned magic. However, he can wield various projectile weapons that appear here and there, and can be a big help in battle.

I don't know the exact statistics, but there are a lot of dungeons, caves, and towers to explore on three different worlds. When you enter a dungeon, the view shifts from an overhead view of Alis and her crew to a head-on 3D view of the maze itself. Of course the background music

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Other Ports

By Rusel DeMaria

This month, I looked at some new titles for the Mac and the II GS, and a few ports from other systems.

Top on my list of new titles for the Mac are two games where you try to find a little action --of different kinds --*Road Racer* from PCAI, and *Romantic Encounters at the Dome* from Microillusions.

Road Racer is from the people who brought us MacRacketball and MacGolf. This one features a '65 Corvette and a series of country driving courses. Using the 4-speed manual transmission, you can practically fly around the curves and attain speeds up to 200 MPH on the straightaways. Your main challenge is time -- you must complete the course before time runs out. The good news is that you can't actually destroy your car or yourself when you crash (which you will do). The bad news is that you lose precious time as you start your way up the gears again.

You control the car with the mouse. One thing that takes some getting used to, if you play a lot of driving type games, is the lack of mobility of your car. This Corvette has a fairly wide turning radius, and at least when you first play, you have a tendency to try to make turns that you just can't make. However, the steering limitations are part of what makes this game a challenge.

The visuals in *Road Racer* are great. The Corvette is a digitized image of the real car; the scenery is interesting and varied. However, you won't have time to enjoy the scenery all that much. You'll be too busy trying to stay on the road. At the high speeds you can attain, the

game is a challenge.

Romantic Encounters at the Dome

is an amusing adult fantasy game. There are enough graphics in the game to keep it interesting, though it is primarily a text adventure. Though it is R-rated and not recommended for those under 16, it is not seamy or pornographic. Mostly it is pretty suggestive, but not much more. It's more a game of interpersonal strategy than lovemaking.

Along those lines, there is also a Love Testing sequence in the game where you can find out about your sexual IQ. The Love Testing itself is a pretty interesting aspect of this game.

New on the Apple II GS is *Warlock* from 360 Pacific.

Warlock

is a fast paced arcade game reminiscent of Dark Castle, though less complex. Being less complex doesn't mean easy, however. In this game, you must play the part of a warlock whose

job it is to cross a multi-level landscape of ghouls, ghosts, goblins, gargoyle, fire breathing giants, and a host of other creepy characters, obtaining the stolen Karna jewel and several other magic items along the way. The graphics and action in this game are intense and you must battle time and your own rapidly depleting power level to successfully complete the quest. Some of the items you need are guarded by nasty creatures, and it takes more than just shooting to win. You need a little strategy from time to time.

The enemies in *Warlock* seem endless. You can clear a screen of zombies, only to be surrounded moments later. The game is fun, though a bit violent and hectic.

Times of Lore (from Origin Systems for the Apple II series) is a bit more subdued than *Warlock*, and contains a more elaborate adventure game along with its arcade-like action. In

Time of Lore, you find yourself in a time of swords and sorcery. The game's history is told in

the form of a short story in the manual. Suffice it

to say that you are on a quest to restore order to

the kingdom, and, hopefully, to assume the role

of High King. But your origins are humble, and

you must prove yourself by undertaking tasks of

increasing difficulty.

To begin with, you will want to interact with

some of the friendly characters in the game, accept information and, eventually, accept your

first quest. However, once you leave the relative

safety of the cities, you are beleaguered by an

assortment of unfriendly characters, and you'll

have to fight your way to your current goal.

Along the way, you may pick up weapons, gold,

or magic potions. Fighting is fairly simple, and

in some cases, using magic against them.

This is a true role playing game in the sense

that you must build your character through experience.

It is somewhat arcade like in the way it

plays, but it contains a fairly well developed plot

and a series of quests and tasks. You can save the

game at a city inn, so you don't have to play it all

in one setting. Also, if you die along the way,

you can start over at your last save.

Graphics in *Times of Lore* are good, and

feature an overhead view of a world that includes

different kinds of buildings, roads, paths,

bridges, lakes and rivers, forests, and more.

Also appearing on the II GS are ports of other

games - *California Games* from Epyx, *MiniPutt*

and *Serve and Volley* from Accolade, *Rampage*

from Activision...

Finally, this month I want to mention a new

product from Epyx. It's for the Atari ST, and it's

called *Art and Film Director*. Though I haven't

had a chance to work with this product yet, it

looks like something to check out. It includes a

full paint program with a cell animation sys-

tem for making your own cartoons. The package

includes some fine drawing tools as well as ani-

mation tools like tweening. It will also work with

pictures from NEOCrome and Degas Elite. You

can even record your cartoons onto your VCR to

produce your own shows. *Art and Film Director*

joins Microillusion's *Cel Animator* for the

Amiga as one of those programs designed to en-

courage true creativity.

49



Phantasy Star shops.

◀ 46

changes, too. During battle and while interacting with other characters, the scene changes, too, so that you can see a closeup of the other character. The graphics are very nice, fast, well-drawn, and colorful. Some of the graphic effects are enjoyable, though, once you have played the game for hours and hours, the graphic quality begins to be unimportant.

Dungeons are tricky. They feature many twisting passages, pit traps, hidden doors, and, worst of all, many, many doors leading to different levels and paths. On a given level, you might find several doors leading up or down. That makes mapping more difficult since you often have to create little scattered bits and pieces of mazes.

Most of the puzzles in the game are easy to figure, but a few are pretty hard. Fortunately, you can save up to five games on the cartridge, so you can always take care to back up your progress. In fact, you can back up any game to any save game slot. I used one game for my master game, another for incremental saves during dungeon explorations, and a third sometimes when a dungeon branched in many places (to keep one save back at the branch and explore the other branches one at a time).

If you don't take precautions, you are likely to run out of hit points before you complete your explorations. Only in towns and villages are you

safe from attack by enemies, so you must be ever on the alert.

The most salient quality that a role player must have is patience. You can't be in too much of a hurry, or you'll likely miss important, but subtle details.

Even though you begin the quest knowing who your main enemy is, you don't know where he is. Nor do you know what you will encounter along the way.

It turns out that one of your main foes is Medusa, and she won't be easily defeated. In fact, you may spend most of the game seeking the necessary equipment to defeat Medusa, and by the time you do, you will probably be almost ready for Lassic, himself.

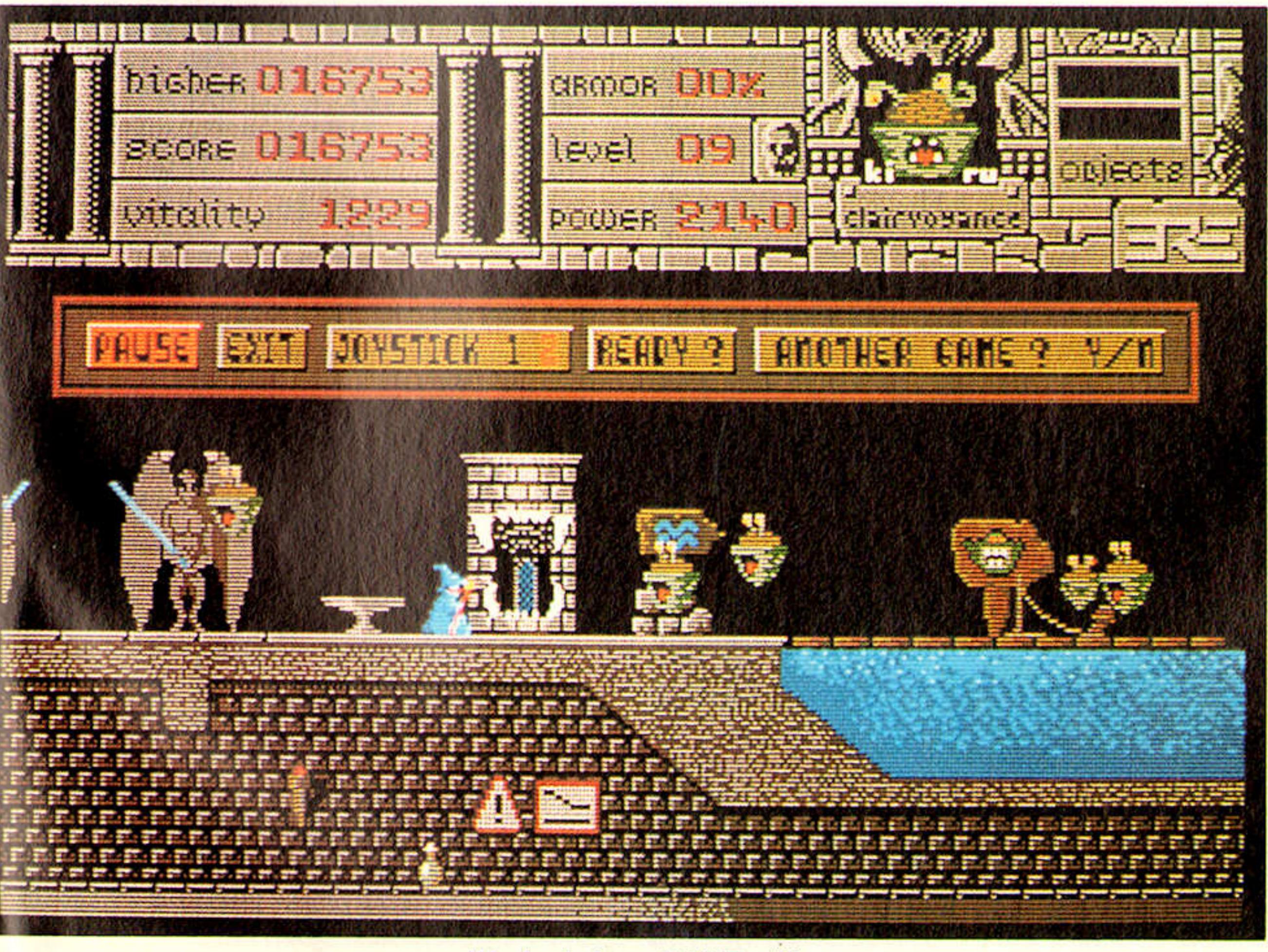
This game is a mongrelized collection of names and legends from various nationalities. Myau is a funny name; it is equally odd to find Noah, Odin, and Medusa in the same game. There are also a few surprising, and humorous typos in the game, though they do not detract from its playability.

All in all, *Phantasy Star* is a great adventure for the patient, careful, persistent traveller. It is pretty typical from the roll playing standpoint--lots of violence, killing and monsters. On the other hand, it is to be commended for casting a heroine in the leading role.

CP RATING: 9.20
Circle Reader Service Number 40.

Name: *PHANTASY STAR*
Type: Role Playing Adventure
Formats: Sega Game Machine
Publisher: Sega
Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: Sega machine
* **Players:** One
(room for 5 saved games)
Price: \$70.00

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (8.2)
Documentation: Very Good (8.7)
Graphics/Text: Good (8)
Realism: Excellent (9.3)
Playability: Excellent (9.5)



Warlock from 360 Pacific

Channel Three

Sega and Atari

By Rusel DeMaria

Big news from Sega recently was the introduction of **Phantasy Star**, their roll-playing adventure. See the review elsewhere in this issue. Also from Sega is **Thunder Blade**, a helicopter mission with a twist. Although Thunder Blade begins as a traditional overhead view game, it shifts to a three dimensional, line of sight game that provides additional appeal. Basically, you just have to survive the endless waves of enemy helicopters, planes, tanks, and ships that try to shoot you down. You take as many with you as possible. You earn points for each successful kill, and at the end of each stage of the action, you get



Start game graphics for *Phantasy Star*.

additional bonus points. New ships are awarded when you score enough points.

The action in **Thunder Blade** is pretty much non-stop. You shoot air-to-air 30mm automatic cannon, and, for ground and sea enemies, you have the air to ground missiles. You'll often find yourself shooting down enemy planes while attempting to line up an enemy on the ground. Since you can only shoot one missile at a time, you must make them count.

Three new Sega titles should be just coming out from Mediagenic. They are **Rampage**, **Cyborg Hunter**, and **Bomber Raid**.

Bomber Raid is a challenging game in which you play a pilot on a series of bombing raids. The

idea is to survive hordes of planes and other airborne enemies while attacking various battleships. Along the way, you can pick up extra capabilities and special weapons. You can shoot traditional automatic fire, or use your bombs to destroy ships. You can also build a fleet of planes to fly with you by picking up special objects that give you support planes.

Bomber Raid is fairly easy to play, but contains a lot of options and lots of action. It requires some considerable dexterity.

Cyborg Hunter is an adventure game in which you must infiltrate and explore an enemy base. Taking elevators through different parts of the complex, you must find and use various weapons and armor to make your way to the final confrontation with the enemy. This game requires quick reactions and a mastery of various fighting techniques. You can obtain many objects including a rocket backpack, various shields and weapons, and more. Your use of some special abilities is limited by the amount of energy you have.

The graphics in **Cyborg Hunter** are very good, and the game is fun, though relatively easy to complete--with dedication. The casual player may find the game less easy to penetrate.

Finally, **Rampage** is a port of the popular coin-op game in which you play one of three monsters bent on destroying one city after another. You find yourself tearing down buildings in San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis, and on... This is a very faithful reproduction of the coin-op game, and the first one I've seen that satisfies me. I've seen other versions on home computer machines, but they were too slow. In this game, the action is smooth and fast. You can play one or two players at a time, and enjoy the somewhat grisly thrill of eating helpless victims, bashing tanks and helicopters, and perhaps electrocuting yourself on a neon sign.

For monster movie fans, this one is a must.

Food Fight

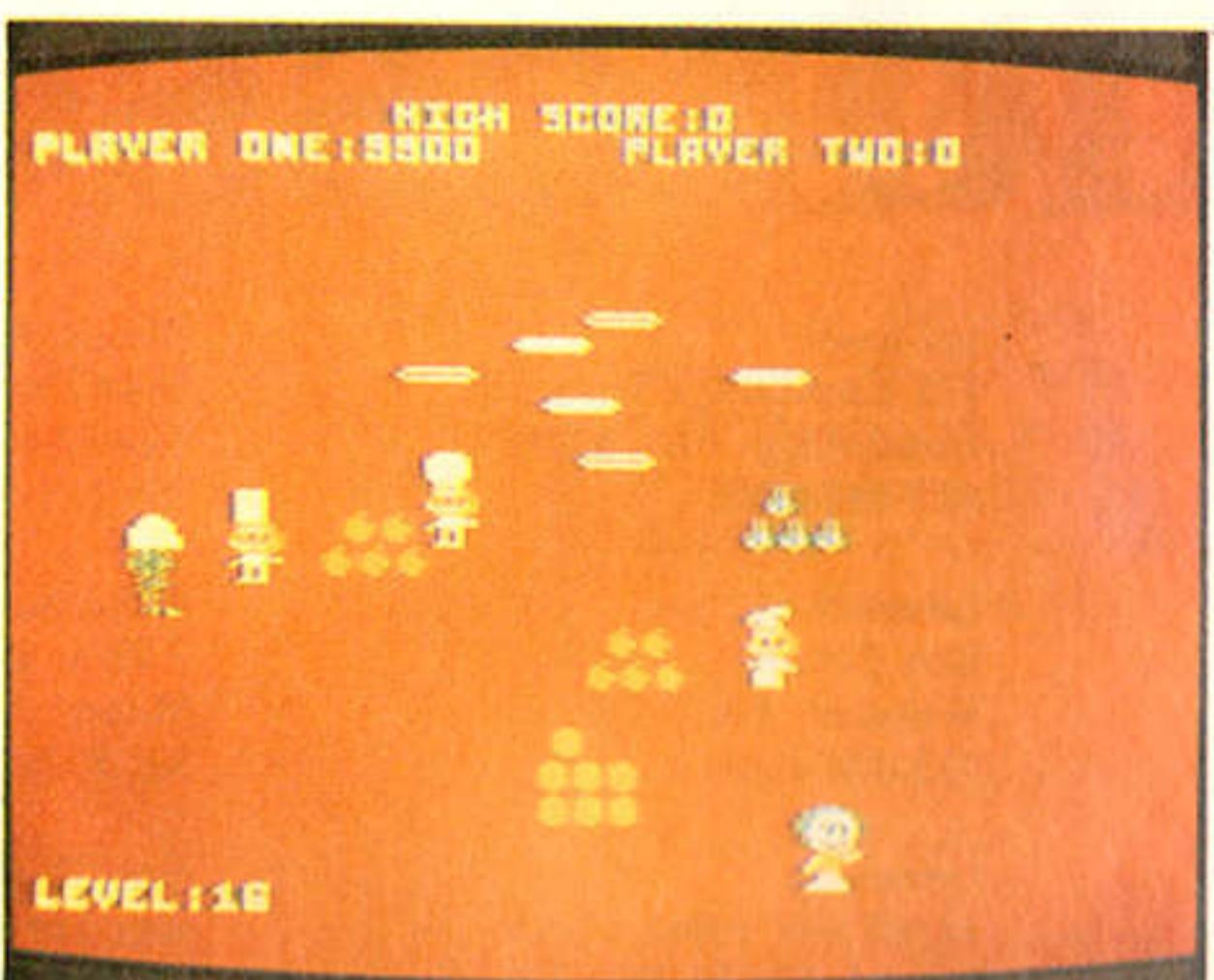
By Rawson L. Stovall

I have always wanted to participate in a food fight -- a real knockdown food fight like the ones I've seen on episodes of *The Three Stooges*. However, the one day a food fight broke out at my high school cafeteria, I was absent. That day, according to my friends, pickles, pizza, hamburgers, ice cream, mashed potatoes, and salad flew everywhere. And to believe that I missed it!

FOOD FIGHT by Atari for the XE game system and XE/XL computers is designed to satisfy this childhood fantasy of being a part of a food fight --without the mess. Too bad the game isn't all that great.

The game's story line is all about Charley. Charley loves to eat. One day he visited the carnival and went straight to the Food Fight contest. In this contest, Charley hurls mounds and mounds of spinach, bananas, watermelon, tomatoes, and cream pies at disgruntled chefs. These chefs, however, fight back. And if he gets hit, the chefs finish him off under a mountain of mush. If Charley does well, then there's a gigantic ice cream cone as a reward just waiting for him.

Charley, though, has to hurry. That's because if he waits around too long then the ice cream will melt. And if it melts, then Charley doesn't



have enough incentive to go on -- so he quits and the cooks take that opportunity to nail him.

The player controls Charley. Charley moves around the screen, picking up food from piles and throwing them at the chefs who pop up out of manholes. The object isn't to hit as many chefs as possible because they just keep coming and coming. The object is to get across the screen to the ice cream cone -- that's it! Run across the screen, hit a few chefs with food, eat some ice cream and then go on to the next wave which is practically the same thing over and over and over.

The one thing that struck me about this game

(as does most of the latest Atari XE games) is that the game is so darn repetitious. After the first screen (which only takes about 15 seconds to complete) the player has seen it all! Oh, in later waves there may be more cooks, different foods to throw, or different colored ice cream, but the extremely simple game play itself doesn't change at all.

The XE game system (which is the old Atari 800 in disguise) can have very good games. The XE will accent any old 400/800 or 800XL cartridge games. I grabbed some of those games that I haven't played in years and tried them out on the XE game system. The quality of those 3-5 year-old games such as Activision's **THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR** and **PAST FINDER** as well as Parker Brothers' **MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE** and **GYRUSS** far surpassed the quality of what Atari is currently offering. Don't ask me why -- ask Atari.

Grabbing pies and spinach left and right I toss my heart's delight towards the cooks. More cooks come, and ice cream melts further. I run to the ice cream, but I'm to late -- it's melted. All of the cooks laugh and I am pelted with entire screen full of food. Big deal! **FOOD FIGHT** isn't all that it's cracked up to be. Come to think of it, a real food fight might not be all that great, either.

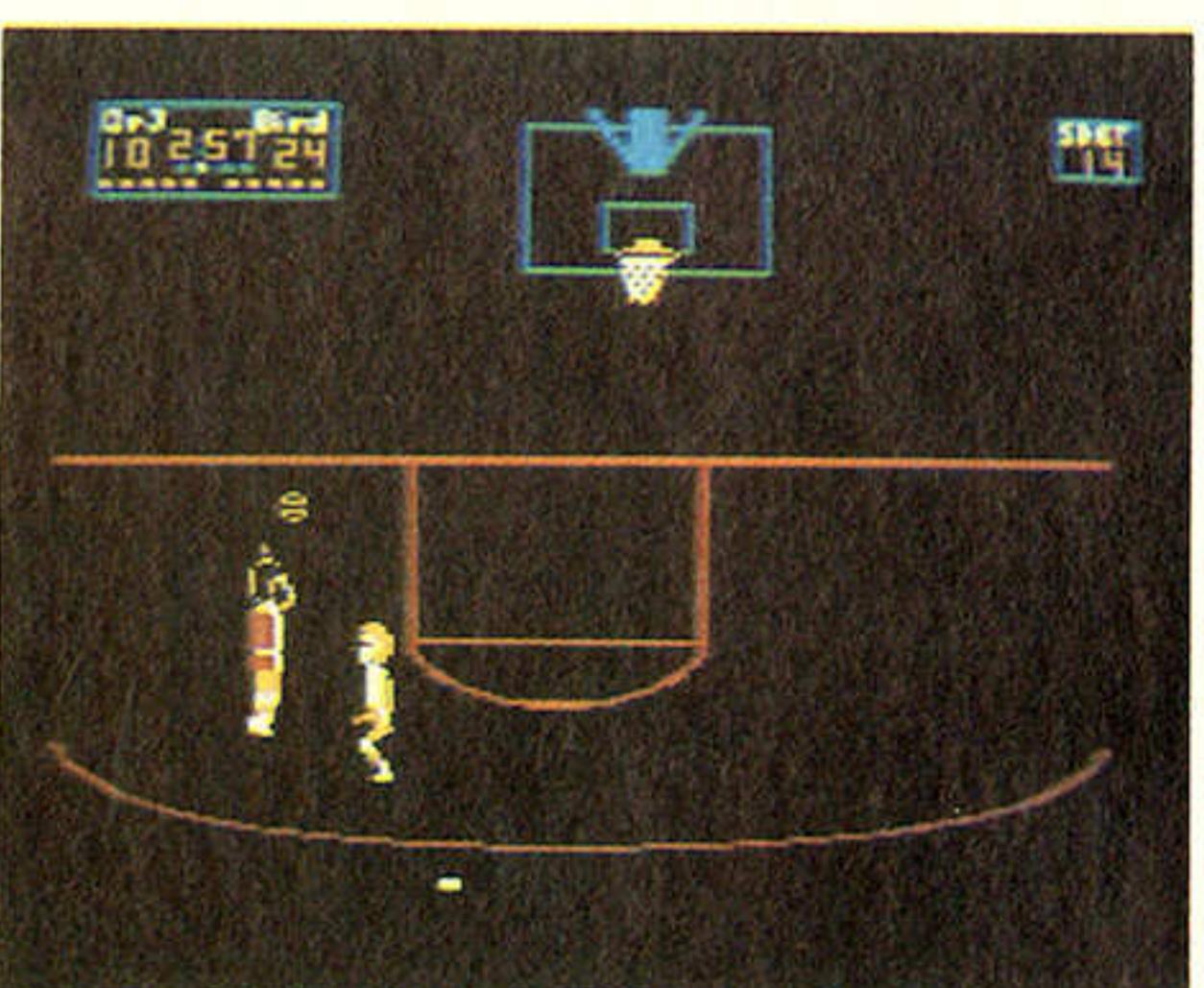
One-on-One Basketball

By Rawson L. Stovall

It's like a dream come true -- playing one-on-one with "Dr. J" Julius Irving or Larry Bird. In **ONE-ON-ONE BASKETBALL** BY Atari for the XE game system, the player assumes the role of either Dr. J or Larry Bird in a one-on-one game with the other. The player can play the computer or a friend.

According to the instructions, the capabilities of you and your opponent will be just like those of Irving's and Bird's. In other words, the computer knows their shooting percentages and their free throws. The player's scoring ability will depend on his timing, how great the opponent is at guarding, and from what position the player is shooting.

Sometimes the player will make an exciting play and the computer will freeze the game play for a few seconds and display an instant replay. One time in the middle of my game, the computer cut right in and displayed an instant replay. It was a nice touch, but in my opinion, the play that it "instant replayed" wasn't much different than my other plays.



The sounds are just about the worst I have ever heard! The roar of the crowd sounds more like someone barfing into a microphone with a static-filled speaker turned on full blast. Sorry, but that's the best way I can describe it. There are no sounds of squeaking shoes or the "swish" of the basket -- just the sounds of the crowd, and the dribble of the ball. The only way to play this

game is with the volume turned off.

The game is quite slow and uneventful -- sometimes you make a shot, sometimes you don't. The tempo of the game speeds up a bit if you're playing a friend, the time is running out, and the score is very close. Also, once I shattered the backboard which was somewhat thrilling, but as a whole the game is really slow action-wise.

Also, **ONE-ON-ONE BASKETBALL** has very limited game play. You shoot two-pointers, you shoot three-pointers, you block, steal, and run around a bit, but that is all. You don't control a whole team, you don't have anyone to pass to, you don't have complex strategies to learn -- what you see is what you get. Although the idea of having certain capabilities is very interesting, it doesn't make up for the limited game play.

Once again, Atari has turned a potentially great game into a bomb. The sounds, the slow action, as well as the limited game play, all transform this game into a waste of money -- a waste of money for both the consumer and Atari. As far as a game of one-on-one basketball goes, I prefer the backyard, gymnasium or driveway version.

Snapshots

By Daniel Carr



CHOO CHOO

THE TRAIN: ESCAPE TO NORMANDY is a fast-paced WWII rail simulation in which you must take over a German occupied train loaded with the art treasures of France and get it to Normandy before the Germans can smuggle it to Berlin. Getting there won't be easy. You must frequently stop at stations (which could be enemy held) to resupply and watch for ambushes along the way. Fighters, gunboats, traps and sabotage will keep you busy every mile. IBM, C64. ACCOLADE. Circle Reader Service Number 1.



BIONIC SLAUGHTER

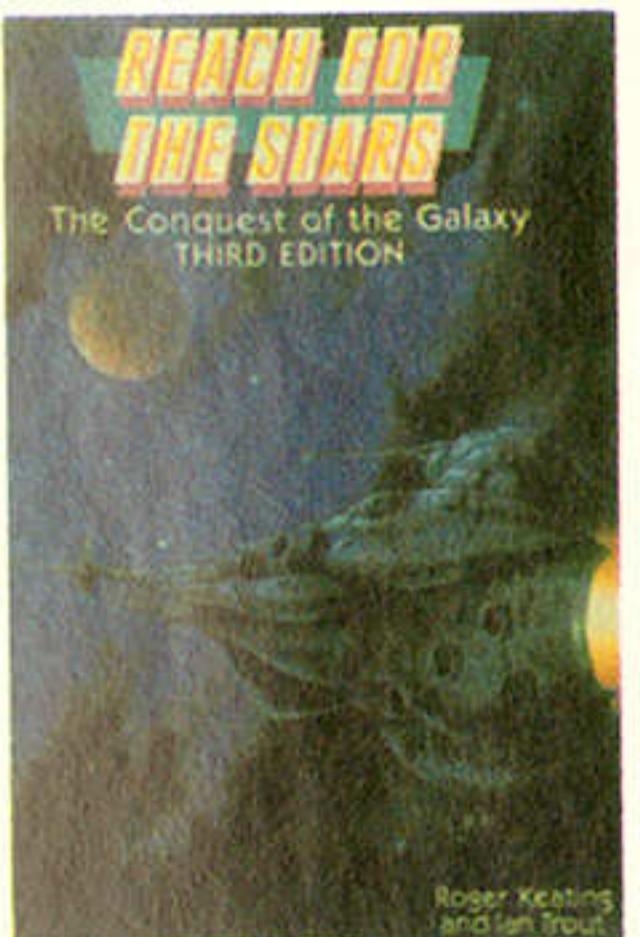
The future is not a happy place in **BIONIC COMMANDO**. The world is constantly enduring the ruthless onslaught of attacking forces. Only one soldier with the most impeccable and technically advanced bionics ever developed can rise to god-like proportions to become an unstoppable juggernaut bashing its way into the enemy's fortress and ending this mess once and for all. CAPCOM. Circle Reader Service Number 4.



MARITANS

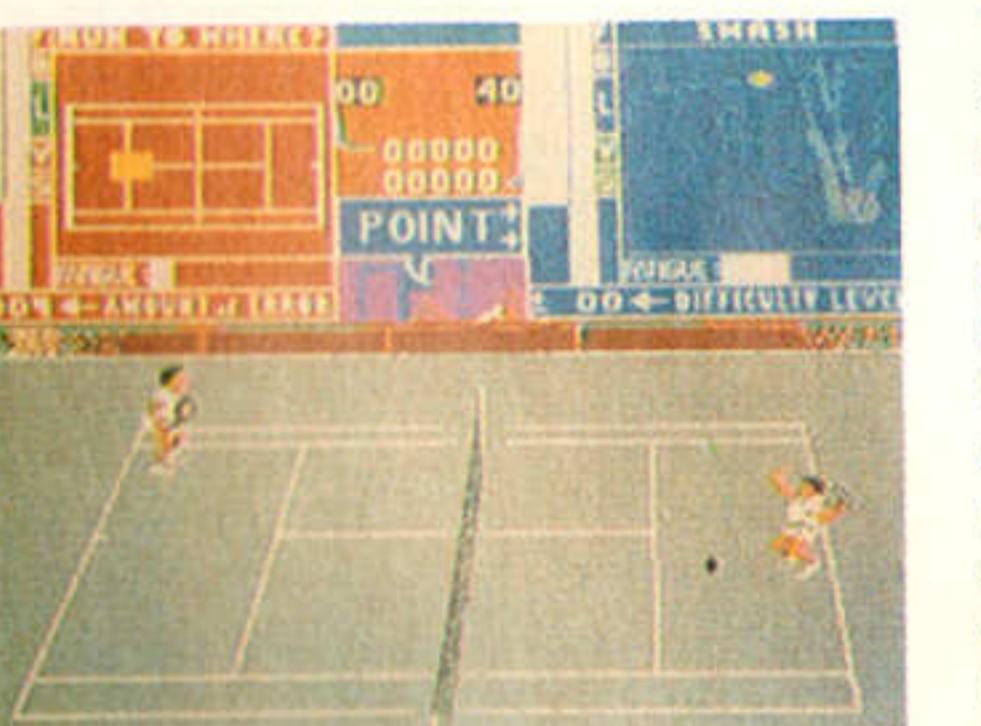
In **MARS SAGA**, Mars is colonized and convicts are used to mine the planet for its resources. You play Tom Jetland, a rough-and-tumble type trying to find out what happened to the farthest outpost, Pro-

scenium. This science fiction role-playing game has top-down 3D animation, automapping, complex combat and involved character generation with 21 different skills to learn. There are many gadgets to find and monsters to fight as you adventure across the planet. C64/128, ELECTRONIC ARTS. Circle Reader Service Number 9.



FINAL FRONTIER

The classic game **REACH FOR THE STARS** is in its third edition for the Amiga. Up to four human and/or computer players start out with a small colony and must build it into an empire. The game is heavy into economics; each player must manage his planet's economy well in order to build ships and conquer the galaxy. The game features many play options and four levels of play with an enhanced veteran mode to make it really tough. The game is not copy protected. Amiga, Mac, C64/128, Apple II series. STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP. Circle Reader Service Number 7.



MATCH POINT

Compete in international tennis with **SERVE & VOLLEY**. Select from a list of ranked players or create your own. Each player has his own stats along with strengths and weaknesses. Lots of features and detail are included: stroke selection, ball placement, different serves, three difficulty levels and three courts to choose from. Also included are five different hits: volley, forehand, smash, lob, and backhand. IBM, C64/128. ACCOLADE. Circle Reader Service Number 2.



KUNG FU

In **KARATEKA**, the nasties have torched your village, scattered your friends and family and worst of all, kidnapped your bride to be. So, it's off to the evil warlord's castle where your bride is held captive and kick some butt. Use the keyboard or joystick to kick and punch your way through the castle guards, defeat the warlord and rescue your bride. Smooth 3D animation and digitized sound keep the arcade action fast. Atari ST and 8-bit, Apple II series, IBM, C64/128. Circle Reader Service Number 6.



TAKE SWORDS

In **TIMES OF LORE**, the land of Albareth is being ravaged by outlaws and rival lords battling for control of the land. The program gives you a top-down 3D animated view of the action. C64/128, IBM. Circle Reader Service Number 3.

Twenty years ago the king and his young son disappeared, leaving the land in turmoil. You get to play the soldier of fortune battling assassins, wizards and monsters while questing for fame and fortune. The game is a blend of arcade and fantasy role-playing with rich 3D animated graphics and sound. You can explore 45 different buildings including cities, towers and dungeons and meet 60 character types. C64/128, Apple II series. Circle Reader Service Number 5.



EPIC ROLE-PLAYING

DEATHLOAD takes place in the land of Lorn, capital of the Kodan Empire. The Deathload wants it all for himself and has besieged Lorn. The player must create six parties that represent the last hope to save the kingdom. The game includes 157 dungeon levels, 128 different monsters, 16 continents and 84 magic spells. There are eight character races, from human to troll, to play, each with 16 classes from fighter to wizards to choose from. There are thousands of locations to explore including cities, temples, forests, tundra, polar bears and tumbleweeds. C64/128, Apple II series. ELECTRONIC ARTS. Circle Reader Service Number 10.



RACK 'EM UP

Hustle pool with **RACK 'EM** an arcade style simulation. Choose between snooker, bumper-ball, 8-ball, 9-ball, standard 15 or customize your own game. You can call your pocket, control your shot power and put english on the ball. Play with the program's trick shots or make your own and save your ten best to disk. The program gives you a top-down 3D animated view of the action. C64/128, IBM. Circle Reader Service Number 31.

► 30

enemy, there is a small gauge at the bottom of the screen which lets you know how many wacks with your sword it's going to take to kill him or it. Your strength controls how heavy a blow you can do. In other words, the higher your strength the less wacks it takes to kill something.

Magic items are found as you make your way to the wizard. A potion will either give you more strength or an extra life. A "Zapper" will kill just about everything on the screen at once so be careful with this one. Lastly, a "Shield" will protect you for about 30 seconds. Note that potions are taken immediately and that you can only carry any combination of four Shields and Zappers.

The monsters are very well done graphically and animate nicely if not comically. The city guards are tough with their spears and axes, and the castle "guards" attack with magic fire bolts. There are these fat dudes on some kind of pogo sticks, zombies that will throw up in your face if you don't duck and a very weird climatic sequence in the wizard's tower that I still can't figure out. No, I haven't killed the wizard yet.

SWORD OF SODAN is an excellent game. The four megabytes (on three disks) has a lot to keep you busy. On the Amiga, in which this game is being reviewed, the graphics and sound are arcade quality. The action (animation) is fast and the digitized sound is equally good.

Name: **SWORD OF SODAN**
Type: Arcade
Format: Amiga
Publisher: Discovery Software
Designers: Soren Gronbech & Torben B. Larsen
Ages: 10 & Above
Requirements: 512K, Joystick
Players: One
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (9)
Documentation: Very Good (9)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.8)
Playability: Excellent (9.8)

CP RATING: 9.60
Circle Reader Service Number 31.

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Coming Attractions

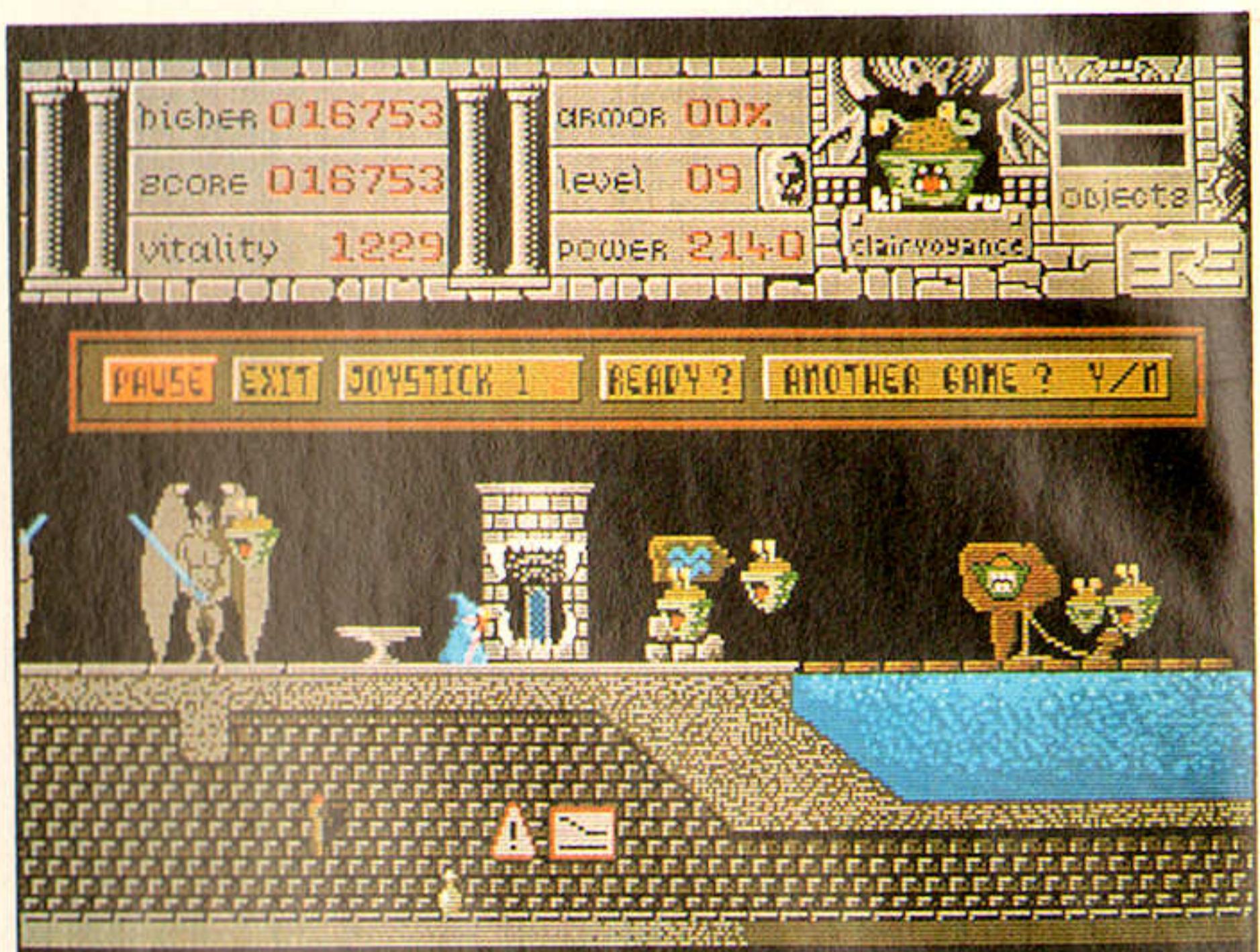
What's up for March? We don't have a special section so we have more room for a greater variety of game reviews.

For our sports fans, there's Strategic Sports Football by Epyx. Karateka from 360 Pacific isn't exactly sports, but it's an old favorite in a new format. Then for the golfer, there's Mini Putt from Accolade, a miniature golf simulator.

For the adventure minded we have a long list. Times of Lore, by Origin will be there. Space Station Oblivion from Epyx will be reviewed by Cheryl Peterson, she'll also review Zork Zero from Infocom. Warlock by 360 Pacific will be reviewed by Rusel DeMaria, who will also review Arcade Construction Kit from Broderbund.

For those who go to war, there's 688 Attack Sub from Electronic Arts. Then there's The Train from Accolade which is about escaping from Germany to France with a train load of French art that was stolen by the Nazis. Long awaited F-19 Stealth Fighter will get reviewed; it's from the Microprose, and it looks promising. Thud Ridge from 360 Pacific is a Viet Nam Jet fighter simulator.

Joker Poker from Joker Software comes to us from down under and it is a unique game. Buyers of this game can actually compete for



Warlock from 360 Pacific

prizes by sending in the disk which can hold top scores for the players. Corruption will take you behind the scenes of the gambling world, and this one's from Rainbird.

This is just a short list of what's coming in our March issue. The number of reviews per issue is on the rise and we're hard at work looking for the newest, and hottest games coming out on the market. So, pick up next month's issue and browse through it before you spend your money on a turkey.

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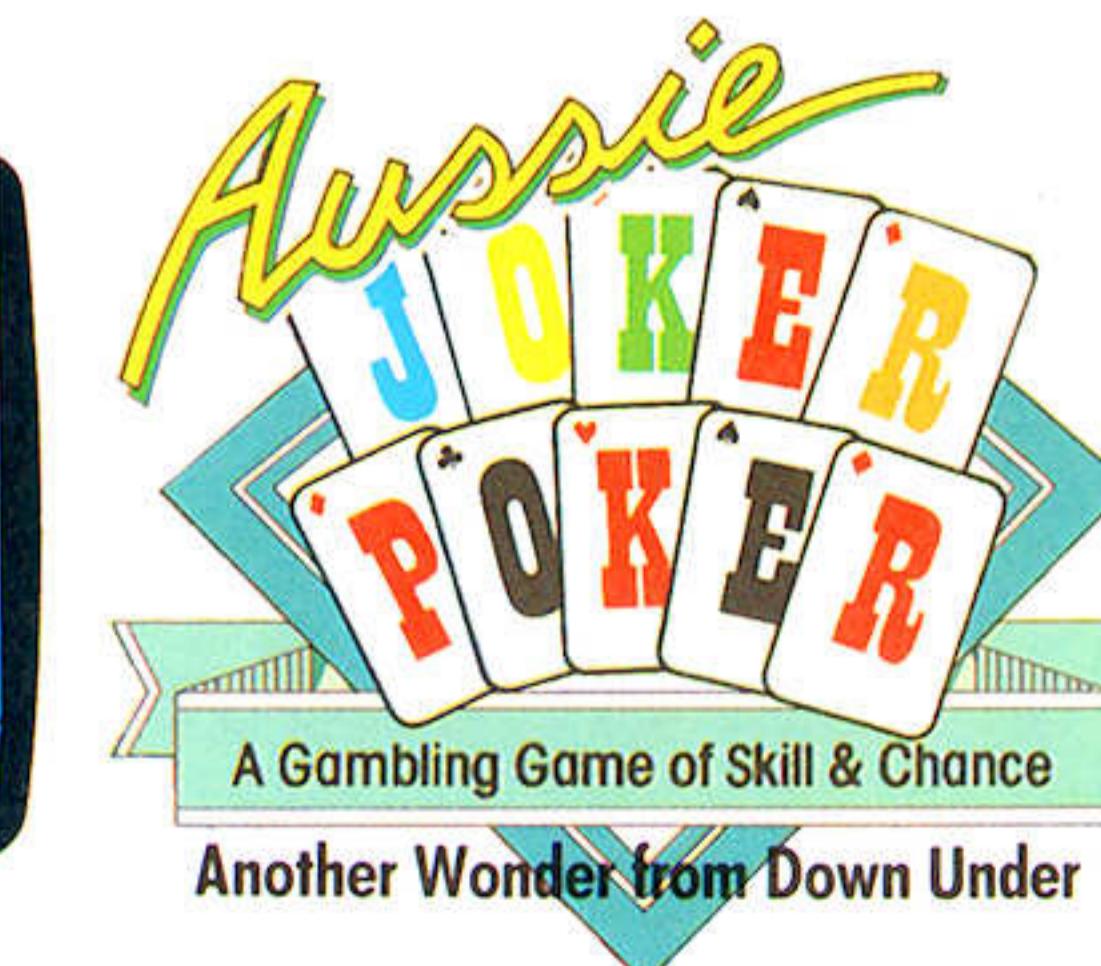
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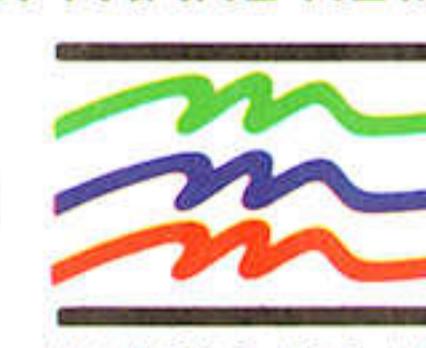


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